LITTLE TU'PENNY

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BY THE AUTHOR OF

'JOHN HERRING,' &c.

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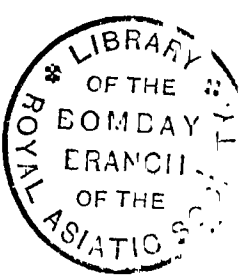
By the Author of

'JOHN HERRING,' 'MEHALAH,' Etc.



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LITTLE TU'PENNY.

PART I.

I.

HOW SHE CAME BY HER NAME.

ANYONE who knows the neighbourhood of London knows the London clay. The hedges are heaped up of London clay, the ditches are dug in it, the fields that are ploughed turn it up thick and tough and ill-favoured, the house walls are built of it, burnt into pale bricks, the roofs are tiled with it, the very swallows' nests under the eaves are moulded out of it; walk along the roads, and your boots are clogged with it, walk as gingerly as you will, you are bespattered with it. Here and there in the clay-land intervene strips and islets of gravel, where the grass waves and trees and

flowers luxuriate; but the clay-land itself, though it will yield good corn and beans and peas, is not voluntarily luxuriant.

Within twenty or thirty miles of London occurs a tract of flat clay-land, of fields of cabbages and beans and corn, surrounded by stunted thorn hedges, with here and there a brick and tile yard, some worked, others deserted; the old brickfields converted into ragged sloppy depressions. There stand pools of stagnant water, fringed with coarse grass, and the banks sparsely producing horse-daisies, and yellow tansies, and in and out among the coarse grass and coarse flowers appear coarse relics of civilization—broken iron pans and old mustard tins and sardine tins rudely torn open, and broken bottles, and old boots and plenty of fluttering dirty paper. These deserted brick-pits become the refuse middens of London suburbs.

The clay when baked into bricks is not beautiful. You can see it in miles of artisan cottages, gray, differing as widely from the warm pleasant red-bricks of old country houses as boiled veal differs from roast beef.

The road here runs straight as though made by

the old Romans, or as a French road engineered under the first Napoleon.

Beside this road is a gate, opening into a waste piece of ground slightly raised above the surrounding surface, and on this patch of waste land stands a windmill, not one of the old sort with a single stem, that is pushed round by a beam, these are fast disappearing—I think the last place I have seen one is in Prout's landscapes; but of the new and best fashion, wherein the whole upper story revolves on the lower, and the wind, by means of a fan, itself gives the mill its proper direction. The whole of the mill, built of wood, is painted white, white as the flour that is ground in it.

Half-a-mile off runs the wall of a park. That wall marks the limit of London clay and the beginning of gravel, marks where beans end and trees commence, where the plough ceases to run its furrow, and the cow and the sheep and even the deer run instead.

In the mill worked Joe Western, considered a surly, because a silent man, but certainly ungenial and unsociable—a good deal of London clay in his composition apparently.

In the park lived Dick Redfern, the keeper, his wife, and only child Trip. It is waste of words to say that Triptolema, being an only child, was spoiled. But then—was there not an excuse for it? An excuse to be found in the appearance and ways of the child? When an ugly, ill-conditioned little girl is pampered and petted, we see at once that the parents are blameworthy; but when the girl is pretty and winsome, skilful in working her way into the hardest heart, as the wood-worm bores into the most obdurate oak, then we allow that the parents are excusable.

How did the girl come by the name Triptolema? Worse — infinitely worse — her entire Christian name was Triptolema Yellowley, or to be more exact, Yellowleaf. She got her name in the following manner:—

Mrs. Redfern, the keeper's wife, had been lady's-maid at the Hall to the Misses Tottenham. When there, she had on one occasion been much impressed with hearing the name of Triptolemus Yellowley frequently mentioned by the young ladies, who had been reading Sir Walter Scott's 'Pirate.'

It was a name that impressed itself upon her

because it was long, and it was unusual. But though she heard and treasured it, she ill-remembered it; and when she had married the keeper and became the mother of a little girl, 'Richard,' said she to her husband, 'she shall be called Triptolema Yellowleaf, and no objection on your part will be of the smallest weight with me.'

'It's a queer name.'

'Queer it may be, Richard,' said his wife; 'but it is a name that Sir Walter Scott, Bart., did not blush to use; and what a Bart. is not ashamed of, I don't see that a gamekeeper should turn up his nose at.'

'I only said it was queer.'

'Well, supposing it to be queer,' said Mrs. Redfern; ''tis d-stingy.'

D-stingy (*distingué* Mrs. Redfern meant) the name of Triptolema might be, but when the girl went to school she found it eminently distressing. The name lent itself to what Professor Max Müller would call phonetic degradation. It invited th wags to try their witticisms upon it, it provoked attention, it excited envy in some, ridicule in others. It was not a name that could be let alone.

When the master of the National School

desired to be particularly withering in his scorn, he named her in full. At the roll-call Trip was happy when only the initials of her Christian name were given her.

The would-be wags among the boys racked their brains to find the means of tormenting her through her name. One would slip on an apron, take a basket, and march past, bawling, 'Tripe, miss!—any tripe to-day?' Another would exclaim, 'Halloo!—how comes a yellow leaf out in spring? You belong to the fall.'

The master quoted something about 'the sere and yellow leaf,' and expected the whole school to laugh at his cleverness. The girls called her 'Colman's mustard,' because of the colour in the name; and the boys, in allusion to her first and last initials, 'Tu'penny Râte.'

Finally, by that perversity which characterises the popular voice (who propounded that preposterous hoax, 'Vox populi vox Dei?')—that voice, which inevitably pronounces wrong, settled upon the nickname which bore the smallest resemblance to Triptolema Yellowleaf Redfern. First sporadically appeared the designation 'Little Tu'penny,' and then, by degrees, it displaced

every other nickname, and throughout the district, even in the Hall, she was known as 'Little Tu'penny.' Mrs. Redfern made great battle against this nick-name. She protested, she scolded, she tried to egg on her husband to taking legal advice and summoning those who used it. 'I don't see,' said Mrs. Redfern, 'why folks may be punished for punching and disfiguring and blackening of your face and eyes, and not for mutilating and ridiculizing of your name.' But the mother's efforts were in vain; the designation of 'Little Tu'penny' adhered tenaciously to her child.

Mrs. Redfern was not the wisest of women. She had picked up a smattering of grand words, and a love of grand things, when she was lady's maid at the Hall. She was superior to Dick, the keeper, in being able to use and flourish these grand words, and talk of grand things. She found it against the grain to descend to the care of a poor man's cottage, and she kept Dick awake to the fact that, in marrying him, she had come down. She kept, indeed, her little parlour in splendour, with bugle mats, and antimacassars, and glass flower-vases, and smartly-bound books

on the table, and glazed and gilt-framed chromo-lithographs on the walls; but her kitchen was most untidy, and the meals she prepared for her husband were uncomfortable, her pasties heavy, her meat and potatoes over or under-done.

'You see, Richard, my good fellow,' she argued, 'I never was, I thank Providence, so low as a kitchen-maid, and I never was a cook. If you'd wear long hair, and let me do it up, or have a fringe that I could curl, I'd show what my powers are, and in what my genius lies. Wait! When Lema is grown up won't I only make a splash with her head.'

Trip, as her father called the little girl, was as pretty, lively a child as ever was seen. She had very fair curly flaxen hair, and dark eyes and lashes. Her complexion was blooming. Her bright face sparkled with merriment. She had a happy spirit, was amiable and engaging, and would have grown into a charming young woman had she not been spoiled by her father and mother, and by the notice taken of her by the people of the great house, Ringwood Hall. Every gentleman who went out shooting with her father had a word for her, and a laugh at her pretty coquet-

tish ways. But it was not her beauty alone that attracted notice, and helped to injure her; her name—that unfortunate name—had its share in harming her. When the young ladies at the Hall had visitors, and were at a loss how to entertain them, they would say, 'Come with us a walk through the park to the keeper's lodge. We will show you there a real rustic beauty, one quite out of the common for her loveliness, and still more out of the common as to her name.'

'We shall see what we shall see,' said her mother. 'More strange things have happened than that a poor girl should marry a Bart. Lema is not only as lovely as an angel, but she has had the advantage of my superior cultivation, and her hair is done up like that of a lady. Why, my dearest Lema, the Poet Lorate writ some verses about a King—I forget his name exactly, but it was something like Cocksure—who married a beggar-maid; and as sure as that you are not a beggar, so cocksure are you to catch something splendid.'

Then, as the keeper came in, she addressed him: 'Richard,' (everyone but his wife called him Dick) 'Triptolema shall not go to school any

more; of that I am resolved. What do you think? The schoolmaster dared—yes, dared—to-day to shout out to Lema from his desk, "Now Little Tu'penny, no talking, please." What is the world coming to when our superiors give theirselves such airs?'

II.

HOW SHE FOUND HER WAY TO THE MILL.

In the windmill on the clay-land worked Joe Western, white with flour, white-faced, white-handed, and with his hair more fully powdered than any footman at the Hall.

He did not, of course, live in the mill; he lived in a low brick-house, one-story high, roofed with tiles, a bow-shot off the mill. On the red roof, turned to a warm brown by age, grew patches of stonecrop of a golden yellow. The cottage had a bit of garden round it, surrounded by a ditch fringed with willows. The garden formed an oblong patch, apparently taken out from a field. This was, however, not the case. The garden and house of the miller were older by at least a hundred years than the field, which had been enclosed within the memory of man from what had been common. Long before the oldest man could re-

member, or before the oldest man could tell of having heard from older men before him, there had been a windmill on Ring Moor, and the miller's cottage had stood where it stands still. Ring Moor was moor no more—it was all enclosed, and cultivated, and drained.

In the cottage Joe Western lived with his mother. His father was dead. He had fallen one day, when drunk, from the steps that led up into the mill, and had broken, as folk said, every bone in his body. This was an exaggeration. He had broken two or three, but one was enough to settle him—his skull, which struck a stone.

When old Miller Western died Joe was aged nineteen. Weighty responsibilities rested on him. He had his mother to maintain, his own future to determine. He was advised by all his father's friends to throw up the mill, as beyond the business powers of a beardless boy. How could a lad without a hair on his chin—with only down on his upper-lip—conduct a mill? Joe was a silent fellow, very self-contained and reserved. He listened to advice, and did not combat the reasonings of his advisers. What could he say? Nothing but time could grow the necessary hair on his

face which would capacitate him, in public estimation, for carrying on the mill. He had broad shoulders; he put them under the burden without a word, and pursued his own course. He kept on the mill.

Joe had been brought up to the business, and he knew its ins-and-outs thoroughly; when his father had been tipsy, Joe had had to manage without him. Now he was dead Joe would manage without him. Joe did not drink like the old man. That glass of ale which upset old Western steadied young Western. He did not become a teetotaler. He had his little cask of ale, at ninepence a gallon, very mild, for his mother, his man, and himself. He knew as well when he had enough as when he wanted something.

Joe was so reserved, so cold, that the neighbours could not make him out. He sowed no wild oats. He sowed nothing but the sweat of his brow. The man who had served his father—a useful fellow, handy and obliging, but not very sober—left him.

'The young cockerel is well enough,' said he, 'but he don't crow. I can't get on with a chap who hasn't a word to say.'

A case of conscience arose in the neighbourhood. It was doubted whether it were right to continue dealing with a miller without a beard on his chin; but partly from indolence and dislike of change, and partly because there was no other mill near, the old customers did not fulfil their threat of leaving, and Joe Western soon acquired fresh customers—he gave good measure. His hand did not go into the bag too often, or had not so big a grasp as that of his father. Moreover, he did not mix inferior grain with the good sent him.

Mrs. Western was a quiet old woman, with a great love for her son, not unmixed with fear. Even she thought it was strange, unnatural, for one of Joe's age to be so taciturn, so resolved, so unsociable.

'As a moral and educated woman,' said Mrs. Redfern, 'I don't like to see a young man set his head so obstinate at making money, and not ready to contribute a brass farden towards the amenteas of life.' (Mrs. Redfern had heard her young ladies speak of the amenities of life as that which softened, smoothed, and sweetened it). 'Not but what he goes to church and puts on the out-

ward form of religion and morality; but then everyone knows why that is. 'Tis because the Rector has his barley-meal from him for fattening his pigs.'

The work of a miller is not a very regular work. Some days pass when there is not wind enough to carry round the sails. Then, maybe, a breeze springs up just when he has no corn to be ground. It is a trying trade to the temper; but Joe Western's temper was never disturbed. When he could do nothing at the mill, he found work in his garden. When there were both wind and corn he worked at the mill night as well as day, and far over the vast flat shone the star of light from the mill-door.

The Miller of Dee cared for nobody, for nobody cared for him; the same may be said of Joe Western, the miller of Ring Moor. He seemed to live for nobody under the sun, except his mother, and he was not demonstrative in his affection towards her—dutiful, thoughtful, kind, but not gushing with love. Certainly, also, nobody cared much for him; he had no companions, no friends. He sought for none, and none came seeking his friendship. But the Miller of Dee was 'jolly,' and

millers ever since have been regarded as jolly men; and I confess that my own experience of millers—and I am dearly fond of mills, wind-propelled and water-driven—is that, as a race, they are a jovial, genial set of men. But Joe was an exception; no element of jollity appeared in him.

His mother shook her head, and sighed to her friends, 'Joe is a good lad, good as gold, without vice of any sort in him. He'll never marry, that's certain, and a pity it is. He would nowhere find a young woman serious enough to suit him. They're all giddy-pates nowadays, thinking of nothing but dress, putting all their wages on their backs. That would never do for Joe; he is all for saving. They like chattering; he hardly ever talks. They are all for laughing and singing and dancing. I never hear him shout or laugh, he scarce smiles, but goes on quietly at his work like a machine. If I were not his mother I should find it dull here with him, and I don't know what I should do without the pigs and the poultry. Did you ever before see anyone who never talked except he'd got something to say? My Joe don't, and that would not content a young woman.'

Sometimes the ladies from the Hall came to the windmill, for much the same reason that took them to the keeper's cottage: they brought visitors to it as a pastime. There was some amusement and much novelty in climbing the wide steps, holding by the handrail, to the upper revolving portion of the mill, in exploring the inside, in hearing the rush of the great wings, in feeling the quiver of the wooden fabric, its strain before a blast, the acceleration of the flight of the sails as the wind strengthened, in watching the grinding stones, and the corn in the hopper slide down like sand in an hour-glass, in inhaling the sweet smell of the flour, in putting the hand into the warm bran that fell from the shifter, then in laughing at one another for the amount of white dust contracted by the clothes. The old miller was always agreeable and polite when the ladies paid their visits. He helped them up the ladder, he made them peep out of the little window in the corn-chamber, he explained to them the working of the machinery and the significance of the fly-fan at the foot of the steps. He opened a trap-door, and let them look down into the basement, where were the sacks and the weighers. Finally,

he had a clothes-brush with which to take off from the ladies' gowns and jackets the white flour that adhered.

But Joe was not genial, like his father; he was civil, he made no objection to having his mill inspected, but he did not accompany his visitors about it, he cut no little jokes, lavished no compliments, expressed no delight in the visit, and, finally, produced no clothes-brush.

So the visits from the Hall became less frequent than they had been; but Joe's manner was not wholly accountable for this—one of the young ladies was married, another was engaged.

One day, when a fresh north-west breeze was blowing, and the white clouds were flying over the sky, the mill wings were whirling with great vigour, and the wind rushed off them in spouts of cold air.

Happening to go to the mill-door, Joe was surprised and startled to see a little figure of a girl turn out of the road, and come over the short grass towards the mill, with the eyes raised to the sails. The child came on unconscious of

danger, unaware of the risk of approaching and coming within the sweep of those mighty revolving wings.

Joe called to warn the child off; but she either did not hear, or disregarded the monition.

Then, with a frown and an exclamation of impatience, Joe ran down the steps, strode over the turf, caught the child by the arm, and roughly swung her aside.

'What are you about here?' he asked. 'You might have been killed.'

The child was Triptolema Yellowleaf Redfern.

'I'm doing no harm,' she said undauntedly. 'I'm not going to eat the mill.'

'The mill was nigh on grinding you.'

She stared at him.

What a lovely child she was, with those large dark eyes and that abundant fair hair!

'You be off, and trespass here no more,' he said.

'I want a fly,' she said. 'I am going up one of those great wings. Stop them for me to climb on to one.'

It was now Joe's place to stand and stare. The child's bright eyes were full of eagerness, the cheeks were flushed, and her hair, almost white in

the sun, blew about her head in the wind like cotton grass.

'You little donkey,' was all he said, 'go.'

Then he moved to return to the mill.

'I am going to fly,' she said resolutely. 'I *will* go up.'

Joe considered a moment, then he went into the weighing-house under the mill, and brought out a whip.

'Do you see this?'

'Yes.'

'What do I use it for?'

'Driving donkeys.'

'Very well, I'll use it on you, if you don't go.'

'I'm not a donkey—I'm an angel. Mother says so, and angels fly. I am going to fly.'

She was composed, well assured he would not strike her. She was still looking at the sails.

'They go so fast,' she said. 'It would be fun going up on them almost into heaven; anyhow higher than the top of yon mill. I've often seen them, but never been so close before. I don't care how high I go, I don't care how fast I go, so long as I go up.'

'If you go up, down you come again.'

'Yes; but again up I should go.'

It was not possible to convince the child. Joe could not leave the mill longer, the bell was jangling to tell that the hopper was empty. He dared not let her remain where she was, lest she should step where the revolving wings might strike her; and one touch of those mighty rushing arms would beat the little bounding, happy, eager life out of her.

He had in his pocket a piece of stout twine. Without another word he drew her to the steps, bound her hands together at the wrists, and fastened her firmly to the rail. Then, without speaking, but with a grim look out of his gray eyes, and a frown and a shake of the head, he went up the stairs.

After a while he returned. He had done what was necessary for a time, and resolved to release the girl. He had given her a lesson, and he hoped she would profit by it, and never again come near the mill.

She was not crying. She was sitting on the step with her hands over her head, fast to the rail, and her face peering between her arms at the revolving sails.

'Now then,' said Joe Western, 'do you see? It is foolery. If you held to the bar of a sail as it went up, you'd be flung head over heels coming down, let go, and be dashed to pieces. Is that sense?'

'I see that.'

'Well, are you satisfied? Go.'

He untied her hands.

'I'm not satisfied yet. I must think; perhaps yet it may be done.'

'How so?' sneeringly.

'I don't know. I must think.'

Then she ran a little way, turned, curtsied with outspread skirts, laughed, and said,

'Though you look cross, you are too floury to be bad. I forgive you, dull Joe Miller.'

III.

HOW SHE LEARNED ABOUT THE FLY-WHEEL.

TRIP, as her father called her, Lema, as she was called by her mother, was wayward and headstrong. Having taken a notion into her little brain, that little brain worked till she had carried the notion into action. She was not in the least cast down by the rebuff she had received, not discouraged in her idea. In her opinion that was possible which, in the opinion of the miller, was not possible. She would show him that she had a longer head than he, that her opinion was the better of the twain.

She lay awake at night thinking of the windmill, and the new kind of fun that was to be got out of it. What was a swing between trees to a soar on the very wings of the wind, with the roar of the wind about her? What strength there was in those mighty arms, able to uphold and give an

aërial spin to a whole school of children, and not feel their weight!

Trip was shrewd enough to see the difficulty pointed out by the miller. She would be reversed if she went down, not only would her head be downwards, but her hands; her wrists would be twisted. Would it be possible for her, if she went up, holding to one rib, at the top so to alter her hold as to reverse her position and come down upright? Then, again, there would be the necessity for a rapid change before beginning another revolution—a change, in fact, at every half revolution. No—this was not possible. Not only would there be the difficulty, but there would also be the danger of becoming giddy and letting go. Trip saw that, once launched, she could not stop when she liked—she must go on till the mill wings ceased to turn.

All at once an idea occurred to her, and she laughed out in bed. Satisfied that she had reached the solution of her difficulty, she went to sleep.

Next day Joe Western, to his annoyance, found, on returning from his dinner, that the little girl was at the gate observing the mill attentively.

He would have passed her without a word, but Trip was curious about the parts of the mill, and she caught the lappet of his coat and held him.

He turned round to drive her away.

'How dusty you are, Joe Miller,' she said; 'a white cloud comes out of you. I want you to tell me something. Why has the mill got a tail?'

'A tail?'

'Yes; that thing.' She pointed to the fly-wheel at the bottom of the steps, on the opposite side to the wings.

'That,' said he, 'turns the mill about.'

'How does it turn it about? It is a wee, wee wheel.'

'Little things sometimes turn very big things about; that is something you have yet to learn.'

'I am a little thing and you very big. Could I turn you?'

A grim half-smile came on his face, then a curl of the lip. He vouchsafed her no other answer.

'I see,' she said, 'that sometimes the wings of the mill point north, sometimes south, sometimes east, and sometimes west. Does that little funny wheel of wings do all that?'

'Yes. The whole upper-part of the mill turns on the basement. That little fan-wheel catches the air, and like the rudder of a ship, or the tail of a fish, gives the head its direction.'

Trip shook her head.

'It is wonderful. It is altogether more than I can understand.'

'There are other wonderful things past your understanding,' said the miller glumly, 'which you will come to know as you grow older, and with your years—wiser.'

'And you too, Joe Miller?' with raised eyebrows and a cunning look—she was thinking of her contemplated sail.

'And I, too, possibly.'

'Can you stop the mill when you like?'

'Yes.'

'And make it go on when you like?'

'When there is wind.'

'May I go upstairs and see the inside of the mill?'

Joe pulled a face of dissatisfaction, shrugged his shoulders, and grunted.

Trip took the grunt as one of acquiescence, and ran beside him as he strode to the mill.

'Look,' she said, 'is that a magic circle in the grass?'

'It is the line traced by the wheel as the mill revolves.'

She caught his hand and hopped up the steps at his side.

'See,' he said, 'the wind is shifting a point, and the tail, as you call it, is adjusting the face of the mill to the new direction of the wind.'

He had never given so full an explanation to the ladies of the Hall; indeed, he had explained nothing to them. But they had come, as he knew, merely to pass time, and this fair, pretty little creature who clung to his hand was really eager to know, and thought about his explanations.

He took her over the whole of the mill; he showed her everything. He described all the purposes and workings of every part of the mechanism. Her intelligence pleased and encouraged him. She insisted on climbing to the very top, up the ladder to where the roof is steep, and she could peep out of the little window of the corn-chamber.

Every windmill consists of two parts—the

stationary basement, with a tent-like, circular roof, and the mill proper, which is moveable, and revolves over this roof. The upper portion has three stages: that highest of all, under the roof—the attic—is the corn-chamber. To it the sacks are hauled up; below that is the story where are the grinding-stones. Below that again is the flour-room, where the flour runs down and is sifted by the vibratory shifter, or in a drum of iron gauze, in which are revolving brushes, into bins. Below, in the basement, is the weighing-machine, and there also are sacks, let down from the flour-room through traps in the roof.

Trip was delighted when she reached the corn-chamber. The mill creaked and swayed with the stress of wind, and also quivered with the rotation of the grinding-stones.

'The air here is fresher,' she said, 'the light is brighter, the smell of the bean-fields is sweeter than below. Oh, why can we not fly? Why are we not like those swallows? We can soar aloft in some ways, why can we not soar aloft in others?'

'How, child, in some ways?'

'Have not the people at the Hall—the Totten-

hams—flown? Mother says that old Squire Tottenham trundled his barrow about the streets of London, and had not a half-crown when he began life. Then he flapped his wings a little and got a bit up, and so he flew up and up, from half-a-crown to half-a-sovereign, from half-a-sovereign to fifty pounds, from that to a hundred —a thousand—to half-a-million. He began with a barrow, then he hopped to a little stall, thence to a shop, so to a great sort of store in Oxford Street—where all the quality go to buy, and thence he spread his wings and flew to Ringwood Hall. Why, he who at one time ate with his fingers out of an old oyster-shell now dines off silver plate, and has tons of silver spoons and forks, as much as any duke, and he who drank at a tap at a street corner now has the choicest wines! Is not that flying? Is not that a soar higher, better than the flight of any lark? The Squire's daughters would have been poor girls like me if their father had not found his wings! He has carried them up and made them proper ladies, as good as any in the land. Why should not I fly? Mother says that I must and ought, and, Joe Miller, I *will* fly!'

The young miller, seated on the edge of a corn-box, bent under the low-sloping roof, looked with astonishment and grim amusement at the girl, who sat in the middle, with the full light and air pouring in on her through the open window. She seemed like a lovely presiding fairy.

'Can you see London from here?' she asked.

'Yes,' he replied; 'that is—a great bank of dark smoke. That black wall of smoke is London. By night you see a glare halfway up the sky.'

'Is it pretty?'

'How can it be—smoke and fire?'

'I myself believe,' said Trip thoughtfully, 'it is only in London that wings to fly with can be got. The Squire found his wings there, and they carried him from his barrow to the Park. If I can't get wings elsewhere, I shall go to London for them.'

Joe looked steadily at her, his face became grave, and he said, 'I beg you say nothing more of flying.'

'But I think it, all the same.'

A slight feeling of uneasiness crept over Joe; why, he did not stop to consider.

'Come,' he said; 'you have been long enough

up here. Slip down the ladder. I will hold your hand and follow you.'

'I like being up here. And, oh, at the end of the sail it must be more airy and bright than here, just as much as this is airier and brighter than below.'

'Go down.'

He was curt with her during the remainder of her stay at the mill. She lingered about, and he had to insist on her leaving. He saw her to the foot of the steps. They were wide apart, and he feared, or professed to fear, that the delicate little feet might slip between them, and she would fall and be hurt.

When they reached the bottom he held her hand, and said roughly, 'Don't think of it—not even think of it.'

'Think of what, Joe Miller?'

'Of what you said—of flying.'

'Why not?'

'Because—because,' he spoke angrily, 'I don't like it.'

Then she laughed merrily.

'And pray, Dusty Joe, what is that to me? You don't like it—I do.'

She held his hand with both of hers, three

fingers in one hand, two in the other, and put her feet together towards him, and leaned back, staying herself by his hand, and looking roguishly into his gray eyes.

How lovely she was, how truly a little witch, with that shining loose pale hair floating about her head, and those talking eyes, and pouting lips, and twinkling smiles in the corners!

'Joe!'

'Well—what?'

'Joe!'

'I can't stay, let go my hand.'

'Joe!'

'Hands off, I'm a busy man.'

'I think a great deal, Joe, of the little wee-wee fly-wheel moving the huge lumbering mill about, with all its grinding stones, and sacks of corn, and machinery. Don't you see, Joe Miller, I'm like that little fan-wheel, and I'm turning you round and round just as I will.'

Then she let go, and ran laughing and singing, light as a feather, away.

And Joe, the heavy, lumbering, broad-shouldered young man, stood staring, looking after her, and wondering what she meant.

PART II.

I.

HOW SHE GOT A WHISTLE.

THREE days after this visit to the mill Trip was again at the gate looking at it. The wings were stationary, there was absolutely no wind. There was no work for the miller in the mill. Trip knew this, and knew that now her time had come for observing and measuring herself by the skeleton sails. So she opened the gate and went in, boldly crossed the magic circle, and stepped up to the wings. The clog was on. Even had a breeze blown they would have only creaked and heaved a little, but would not have swung about. Moreover, the sails were reefed. The air, if it stirred, would pass through the wings. They were mere frames.

As Trip stood studying them, Joe perceived

her. He was working in his garden. He was bent over his work, hoeing or banking up potatoes. He saw her from under the willows before they broke into a spray of red and yellow osier. He watched her figure for some time as she walked about the wing nearest the ground and climbed on to the first rib. Then he pshawed! and growled out a word of annoyance. That child was becoming a nuisance. She would infest the mill like a mouse. She would interfere with his work. She would run into danger. She must be forced to leave him in peace.

So he stood up, walked to the osier fringe, parted the glossy stems, and called 'Little Tu'penny!'

She did not seem to hear him.

'I say—Twopenny Rate!'

No notice.

'Hey, there! Colman's Mustard!'

She turned away towards the steps without seeming to hear him.

'Miss Triptolema Yellowleaf Redfern.'

She was round at once, and came bounding over the turf, with outspread arms, like a skimming bird, her fair hair blown back as she ran.

'Yes, Mr. Western.'

'Come here,' he called. 'Not that way. You cannot jump the ditch. Round the gate in the road.'

'Hold out your arm.'

She leaped the moat; but if he had not caught her she would have slipped back, repelled by the spring-like willow rods, and fallen into the water.

He drew her through the bushes. She was laughing, rosy, smiling.

'What are you doing here, Joe?' she asked.

'Working, Miss Triptolema.'

'Working! Oh, that is too bad. The day is fine; there is no wind. You should take a holiday.'

'I never have holidays.'

'I intend to have nothing else.'

'Why are you not at school?' asked the miller.

'Because I have left school. The master called me names, so mother has taken me away.'

'Names!——'

'Yes; he must learn a lesson. He will lose a penny a week. You also, I must teach you a lesson; you also called me names.'

'The best lesson will be to stay away. You must not come here any more bothering me.'

'Do those white butterflies bother you?' asked Trip, pointing to a pair fluttering over the cabbages.

'Do they not? They are my greatest plague. They eat out the very hearts of my plants.'

'Order them away. They will not go. It is their nature to dance about your garden. You may order me away; but I won't go. I shall play about you; and if I only saw my way to eat out your heart, Joe—I'd do it, and laugh to be able to torment you!'

'There,' said the miller; 'I've no time to chatter with you. All I say is, it is a pity. You ought to be at school. Idleness leads to mischief.'

He resumed his hoe. She seated herself on a rail, surveying her feet, and then began to sing. She had a sweet, sparkling voice. Her notes were like bits of glass.

'Cherry ripe, cherry ripe, I cry!
Full and fair ones, come and buy;
If so be you ask me, Where
They do grow, I answer—There,
Where the sunbeams sweetly smile,
There's the land of Cherry Isle!'

Then the miller threw down his hoe and went indoors, and presently came out with a piece of bread and a plate on which was a slice of honeycomb.

'There,' said he, 'sweeten your red-ripe cherries with that, and go along with you.'

She took the honey gleefully, and sitting on the rail with her knees together and the plate resting on her lap, was still for a while, eating bread and honey.

Joe had a range of beehives in his garden, and he was a famous bee-master. Now on this lovely day the bees were about humming and gathering their sweet food. The sun shone warmly over that little garden, bringing out the fresh, healthy scent of the upturned earth. The bank with thyme, and mint, and marjoram poured forth fragrance. The scarlet-runners were in bloom; so were the tall British Queen peas, and the bees were busy in the corollas of these flowers.

Joe worked on, but every now and then, with furtive glance, looked at the little girl, perched as a ring-ousel on the rail, now intent on her bread and honey. Then he turned round, with his back to her; the sight of her interfered with his diligence.

All at once he was startled. She was before him. She had eaten the bread, finished all the honey, and she danced up to him on tip-toe, singing:

'Cherry ripe, cherry ripe, I cry!
Full and fair ones, come and buy;
If so be you ask me, Where
They do grow, I answer—There.'

She held up her red lips to him.

'You good old Joe! Thanks for the honey. You shall have a kiss.'

He drew up his full height, and stood back.

'No, little woman, they are too sweet—all honey.'

She tossed her pretty head, pouted, and turned away.

'If you won't have my cherries when offered, you shall not have them when you ask.'

'If you want to repay me,' said Joe, 'go back to school, and you shall have as much of my honeycomb at any time as you like.'

'May I?' Her good-humour was back again. 'I'll ask mother.'

'And now,' said Joe, 'look here. I'll give those little red lips something else to do than eat

honey and offer kisses. As you sat on the rail there I thought you a little bird, and a little bird must pipe.'

He took out his pocket-knife and went to the edge of the dyke, among the osiers.

Trip ran after him.

'What are you going to do?'

'I will show you. Exercise patience.'

He seated himself on the bank, and she by him, watching his hands. In the water, on the surface, were countless white, yellow-centred stars—the flowers of the water-plantain, dense as the stars in the winter night-sky. By the side was a grove of glossy-leaved stone-cress, with its blue flowers. A rat flopped into the dyke. There were plenty of them about, and they had runs through the grass from all sides to the mill. Myriads of tadpoles darted.

Joe shortened and peeled an osier, and snicked it. Presently a whistle was completed, very clean, smooth, and neat.

'Is the whistle for me?' she inquired.

'For you.'

'Will it last long?' asked Trip.

'As long as you like to keep it.'

'And if I whistle on it, will you come to me?

'If you need me at any time—really need me—I will come unwhistled for. If you think of flying, I will not come, even if you do whistle.'

II.

HOW SHE MADE HER FIRST FLIGHT.

TRIP watched the mill after this a good deal; without discussing her plan with anyone, it became matured in her brain. Fly she would, and that not metaphorically, like the Tottenhams, from poverty to wealth, from a keeper's cottage to a king's palace, like the beggar-maid—but bodily also, on the sails of the mill. She was, as already said, a shrewd girl, and she saw that she must not allow the miller to suspect she was still set on her plan. Consequently, she observed her opportunity on the sly.

She saw that the mill was stopped when Joe went to his dinner, or when he was adjusting the stones, without the sails being furled. The drag was put on, and the wings brought to a stop. Then, when Joe returned to his work, or when the stones were ready, the clog was raised, and

the arms began again to revolve. This would be her occasion, and for this she watched and waited.

Her scheme was as follows. She had a strong skipping-rope with white handles, striped yellow, red, and blue. The cord passed through these handles, and was secured by a knot at each end. The cord was new and good, the handles solid. She could trust her weight to the cord; it would not break, however severely tested by her.

For several days Trip waited behind a thorn hedge in the beanfield, inhaling the exquisite sweetness of the flowers. I can never pass a beanfield without recalling the words of old Isaac: 'The smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the Lord hath blessed.'

There is no sweetness like the fragrance exhaled by beans—no, not that of roses, heliotropes, orange flowers.

Trip sat behind the hedge. In the shallow ditch grew abundant mint, in gray flower, and here and there shot up the pink spires of the willow herb. When she crushed the mint it exhaled scent, but only near the bruised leaves and stalk, not sufficient to mingle with and overcome the rich, delicate odour of the beans.

Trip peered through the thorns at the mill, whose sails were whirling, and the whirr came to her through the thorns. Now she saw the miller in his white jacket and cap, with his white-dusted face at the door, calling to the boy, and the boy answered, and brought a donkey to the foot of the mill.

The donkey was gray—just the colour of the mint blossom—the dust of the flour seemed to have got into the hairs of a brown ass and turned it gray; but under the belly it was white, as if it had rolled in meal. Joe Western and his man heaved sacks of flour on to the back of Neddy, and the boy sprang up behind, sitting far back on the crupper, and shouted gee-up! and whacked the ass, and a cloud of flour came from his coat as from the lappet of Joe's coat when Trip had slapped it.

'Mind, Tom,' called Joe; 'one sack is barley-meal for the parson's pig.'

'Ah,' thought Trip, 'that is why Joe goes to church, to keep the Rector's custom. I call that mean. I shouldn't have believed it of him, but that mother said it—I mean mamma.'

Mrs. Redfern had enjoined on her daughter not

to call her 'mother,' which she said was 'vulgar,' but 'mamma.' Quality folk never said 'mother.' In all the situations in which she had been she had never once met with, and been in service with, a mother, only with mammas.

'Mam-ma,' said Trip; 'that is like a lamb bleating.'

'Lema, my dear,' answered Mrs. Redfern; 'lamb or no lamb matters nothing. It is d-stingier.'

The answer cut short objection—clenched the matter. It was an argument final and irreversible.

Mr. Redfern, however, stubbornly refused to be called 'papa.'

'I ain't one in corduroys and gaiters,' he reasoned. 'I'm father, if you like, Trip; and if you don't like me on my own terms, get a papa elsewhere; but he shan't be I. But what is more, don't speak of your mother to me as a mamma.'

So Trip got into the way of employing both terms.

How the bees swarmed about the bean-flowers! —Joe's bees, no doubt—about those pretty white

flowers dappled black. Mrs. Western boasted that her son paid his rent out of the honey the hives contained. The bees throve near the beanfields, and the honey they stored carried the sweetness of the beans into the cells and to the tables of those who ate it. A great bumble-bee, clothed in black fur, with orange plush trimmings, too warmly dressed for so hot a day, was trying to force herself into a bean-flower which was too narrow to admit her. She made a dive, kicking out with her black legs behind, then came back and buzzed about the flowers grumbling, but, reluctant to give up her attempt, alighted and rammed her head in again. Trip laughed to see her; the bee, as if offended, then flew off.

Presently Joe and the man stopped the mill. It was noon. Trip saw Joe stand on the steps at the mill-door, with his silver watch in his hand, a big watch that had belonged to his father. Then he signed to his man to follow, and they walked towards the cottage.

Singularly enough, when Joe's father had fallen off the steps and broken his head and his arm and collar-bone and leg, he had not broken his watch—no, not even cracked the glass. The

watch went on composedly ticking, doing its regular work in the miller's pocket, when he lay a shattered, unconscious heap at the foot of the mill. The mechanism of the miller's life stopped, that of the watch went on; for Joe wound it up that same evening, and it had not since been allowed to run down.

People, eager to find fault, thought Joe's conduct eminently heartless, and there was much talk about it. Some even said they would make this an occasion of withdrawing their custom; 'for,' they argued, 'what good can there be in a chap who would wind up his father's watch after he was killed, without first letting it run down?'

It is often the case that widespread prejudices against certain individuals rest on no better grounds.

Mrs. Redfern had been emphatic in her condemnation; she had recurred to the circumstance.

'I never heard of such a thing in polite society,' she said, 'but he knows no better. Still, it argues a natural viciousness, for which there can be no excuse.'

Now when Triptolema saw the silver watch in

the miller's hand, she recalled what her mother had said. The connection of ideas between the watch and vice was not clear to her; still she thought her mother an oracle in ethics, from whom it was heresy to differ.

'There is,' observed Triptolema, to the beans, 'a deal of wickedness in the world. If it weren't for his honey and the mill, I'd never again speak to Joe.'

The wind gently breathed over the field and swayed the heads of the beans, and bowed the honey-gathering bees—Joe's bees—in their blossoms, as though the sweet field agreed with Trip about the condition of the world. On the horizon was a broad belt of smoke, rarely dispersed. There was London. Perhaps the wickedness was there as well as in the mill, and there in an aggravated form. Trip's opportunity had come. The space about the mill was clear. She left the beanfield, entered the gate, and crossed the magic circle traced by the wheel of the fan that turns the mill. Then she cautiously approached the stationary wings, which were now full fledged, the canvas strained over them to the utmost. Only a light wind was stirring that day,

and every breath had to be caught and utilised; not a reef was taken in.

Trip stood behind the sail that rose upright from the ground, screened by it from observation by anyone in the road, in the garden, or cottage. The sail did not, of course, quite reach the surface. She caught the cross-bar and scrambled on to the wing. It had a main beam of great strength, and two sides; across were the strips of wood, or 'splines,' that held the canvas from bulging in, and to which it could be reefed. The girl climbed to the second of these ribs and fastened the ends of her skipping-rope to it; she passed the handles behind the main beam, and drew them through and firmly knotted them. Then she stood up, with her feet in the loop, and jumped and stamped, and the knots held securely.

'Now,' said she, 'I have managed famously. When the sail goes up, I shall be sitting as in a swing, with my head up; then when it goes down I shall descend in the same way, head up. I have only to hold fast by the ropes of my swing, and mind not touch the splines. Whatever will Joe Miller say when he sees that my opinion is better

than his? After that, he'll never dare to call me vulgar names. Little Tu'penny, indeed!'

If Miss Triptolema had discovered this plan unassisted, she would have shown remarkable ingenuity. But she had not been unprompted. The preceding year she had attended a fair with her mother, where she had seen a whirligig, in which those who paid a penny were given a revolution in seats that were swung on pivots to the arms of a vast wheel planted vertically. Consequently, Trip was simply applying to the mill-sails a principle she had seen in operation at the fair.

Nevertheless, it is not everyone who can apply a principle. She must not be denied some credit for what she did.

Having completed her preparations, Trip sat patiently in her swing waiting till the miller and his man returned from their dinner, nothing doubting that they would set the mill agoing without observing her.

It was as she expected. The man came first, Joe remaining at the house to give his mother a few pieces of change to pay a bill to the carrier for some crates.

The man started the mill without casting a look at the sails. The wind caught, strained the canvas; the woodwork creaked, heaved; and then the wings began to move. Trip thought that the grass, the hedges were running away under her feet. Her first sensation was one of alarm, and she uttered a slight exclamation; but this sensation passed rapidly, and was followed by great elation of spirits as the strong beam carried her up. Her weight was of no more account than that of a fly on a carriage-wheel. She did not feel the breeze, because she sat inside, screened by the canvas, but a cold rush of air came down on her head, caused by the rapid upward sweep and displacement.

It would have been pleasanter, if possible, to have sat outside. She would have seen more of the world; the great bulk of the mill would not have intervened between her and the prospect. But that was not possible. As a babe crows when swung into the air by the stout arms of father or mother, so did Trip exclaim with exultation as she was carried aloft. She had no fear of the beam giving way—of her swing snapping. She saw the swallows dashing about her, careless

of the sails, twittering and screaming, and quite indifferent to her presence. She saw away over the beanfield, over the park trees—she saw the roof, the chimneys of the Hall—she saw what she had never seen before, the well in the roof into which water was pumped to supply the house. She saw over the house—away, away, away—to the blue, gleaming river, with specks on it.

She saw nearer a field and a man in it working—no, it was not a man, it was a scarecrow. There were pieces of tin tied to a string, clinking and flickering in the air and sun. She could not hear the clink—she could see the flash.

Yonder was the house of the old woman who took in the washing for the Hall. What a fluttering of white there was on the lines, and oh! one blazing red petticoat, like a tulip.

The beams laboured, groaned; the canvas flapped; Trip had reached the highest point of all, she looked over the roof of the mill.

Now, down, down, she began to go; and as she sank a sensation of sinking made itself felt in her heart. Now only did she fear lest her rope should give way, lest the knots should relax. She came down faster than she went up; the

river, the house, the trees, the beanfield went together like a pack of cards. There was a swimming in her head. When she reached the ground she would have leaped down, had she dared, but she knew such a leap would lead to broken bones and, perhaps, death.

Up—up—up again. The panorama, fan-like, unfolded once more before her. Again that horrible scarecrow, with the straw sticking out of the crown of a battered hat, again the blinking of the tin sherds. Her hands clung to the ropes quivering. Her heart fluttered; fear began to take possession of her, rising like a tide. Tears rushed into her eyes. She could see nothing more, except the black cloud that hung over the metropolis. She cried, but her cries were drowned by the creaking of the sails, or lost among the screams of the swallows. She felt no part of her but her hands, as though she were all hand, nothing but hand clutching at the rope. Every other sensation went away like a dissolving view, and nothing came in its place. An overpowering dread of falling took possession of her, and with the dread a feeling that she must throw herself out of her seat. Only her will held her

in—her will concentrated in the muscles of her hands—she was perfectly conscious of what the result would be should she fall—fall she must—fall she would when swung to the very apogee above the gable of the mill—fall and become a shattered heap like the old miller, Joe's father.

The horror became sickening. The air rushed upwards, now blew her hair above her ears and was cold under her chin, an infinite abyss opened beneath her, her life was pouring out of the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet, and her heart had detached itself from her ribs, and was sinking faster than her body. A spasmodic convulsion came over her arms, and her hands relaxed.

Then, as her senses were leaving her, she was caught, and felt strong arms round her, and saw a white face like the moon in daylight above her, and was aware of a smell of flour. She remembered no more.

When Trip came to herself she was lying on the grass, and Joe Western, with a bowl, was sprinkling water on her face.

'Oh, Joe Miller, I've been up!'

'Little Tu'penny,' she heard him say; 'you've come down.'

That evening his mother said to him, 'Joe, whatever ails you? How your hand shakes. What is it? It shakes like the inking-box.'*

'I've had a scare, mother,' he replied; but gave no explanation.

Afterwards, through the man, she heard how he had seen the child attached to the sail, how he had put on the drag and stopped the mill, and how he had caught her before she fell.

'I dare say that is what made him shake so,' said the widow. 'Why, his hand shook like the inking-box.'

'Ah!' answered the man, 'it was a sort of a damsel that made it shake.'

* The 'inking-box' is a piece of wood that regulates the inflow of the corn between the stones; it is set in motion by an iron spindle that is called the 'damsel.'

III.

OF AN ANSWER SHE GOT.

'My dear Lema,' said Mrs. Redfern, 'I have moved in the best society, and I know that after a service has been done it is a duty to make a complimentary call. The Westerns are a long way below us — below you and me, anyhow: nevertheless, we must not forget to thank them. Put on your smartest Sunday frock, never mind changing anything else. I'll give my fringe a curl, and put on my sealskin jacket, and go with you.'

'But, mamma, it is too hot a day for a sealskin.'

'My dear, it is never too hot to wear one's best and most becoming things. I'd walk into a burning fiery furnace in my sealskin—for the keeping up of appearances.'

'Is it a real sealskin, mamma?'

'It is very like a real one,' answered Mrs. Red-

fern. 'It cost a lot of money, which we shall save on your school-pence now that you are not going to school again. How the schoolmaster could so demean himself as to call you vulgar names I cannot think; I couldn't be vulgar, not if you were to lace me so tight that I parted in the middle.'

'The braid, mamma, is hanging off your skirt in a loop like a skipping-rope.'

'Give me a couple of pins—or, stay, child, put your foot on it and rip it off. No one will see.'

'Hadn't you better wash your hands first, mamma?'

'I'll draw on my lavender gloves,' answered Mrs. Redfern.

'But they are burst.'

'I'll keep my fingers closed over the busted place,' replied the mother.

Bedizened in hat and feathers, with bangles and sequins, Mrs. Redfern sailed away with Triptolema. The girl supposed her mother would visit the mill, and thank Joe in person, and rather wondered how she would get on among the sacks of flour without becoming powdered, but Mrs. Redfern undeceived her.

'Of course not, Lema. Gentlemen call on

ladies, not ladies on gentlemen. Not, my dear, that Mr. Western is a gentleman. A gentleman is one who never does any work, but always walks about with his hands in his pockets. I only spoke of him as a gentleman, as a sort, as they say in French, of fashion-de-parlour. It is vulgar, Lema, to work in any way: never you forget that. A true lady never does nothing but read novels and dress—but no, she don't even dress herself—she is dressed. She sits still reading novels after she is dressed—or she lies on the sophy.'

After a pause for Lema to receive and digest what she had said: 'I hope I've put on enough O-d-Klone. I've been peeling onions, and I've used the scent to hide it.'

Mrs. Redfern drew Trip to the cottage, though the girl's head was turned longingly to the mill.

'Look, mamma, there are the sails! Don't they go high?'

'Yes, Lema, but however you could have thought of going up on them passes me.'

'Mamma, you have always told me to aim at rising.'

Mrs. Redfern intended to blaze in her grandeur

in the face of the widow; like a peacock to strut and spread her plumes, her sealskin, her bangles, her sequins, and to stupefy her with her Eau de Cologne.

And, indeed, when she entered the cottage, the atmosphere was at once impregnated with the scent. No sooner had she taken a chair at the request of the widow, than, looking about her, she saw that her daughter had given her the slip. Indeed, Miss Trip was then running to the mill.

Mrs. Western was not particularly pleased to receive a visit from the keeper's wife. She had a low opinion of Mrs. Redfern. She thought her a vain, foolish woman, and had often remarked that it was sad so silly a creature should have so nice a child to spoil with her nonsense.

'What a queer smell there is here,' said Mrs. Western, and that was her first remark after she had somewhat ungraciously offered her visitor a chair.

'It is O-d-Klone,' said Mrs. Redfern airily; 'I just put half-a-drop on the end of my hankercher before I stepped out. I don't like the smell of beans, I get the hay fever. You are not accustomed to it, I suppose?'

'Can't say I am.'

'It comes of education. I was, so to speak, reared on it. It is genteel. Indeed, you couldn't, not by any effort of your own, be genteel without it, and take your proper place in society. I love O-d-Klone. I can't exist without it.'

'And pray,' said Mrs. Western grimly, 'have you taken the trouble of coming here, just like a salts-bottle, to make me sneeze?'

'You don't like it, I fear,' said Mrs. Redfern superciliously. 'Perhaps not, yet it is d-stingy.'

'Stingy it is,' answered Mrs. Western sternly; 'I feel it right up my nose. But I'll trouble you, ma'am, under this respectable roof, not to swear. I don't make no odds whether you say the full bad word out, or make it a 'd' with a dash. The former is the more honest. My son don't swear, and I won't have a woman cussing and dashing her "d's" here.'

Was ever a woman so taken down? Mrs. Redfern was silent in wrath and consternation.

In the meanwhile Trip had gone to the mill, run up the steps as freely as if they had led to

her home, and encountered Joe the miller in the flour-room.

'Mother has come to thank your mother,' she said eagerly, 'because you saved my life yesterday.'

He at once left what he was about and stood before her.

'But I've done a deal better,' she continued with bright face and sparkling eyes. 'I've come on here to thank *you*. It was you, Joe, saved me, not Mrs. Western.'

She put out both her hands to his. He took and held them.

'If you are really thankful for what little I did,' he said gently, 'you'll not run about any more in idleness, getting into mischief, disturbing busy men, but will go back to school.'

'Do you really wish it, Joe?'

'I do.'

'Then I'll go. But I won't promise for how long. Now I want you to tell me if it be true that you go to church because the parson gets barley-meal of you for his pigs?'

He flushed angrily. She saw that his face waxed red under the bloom of flour that was over it.

'It is not true. I go to church not only to get, but to give.'

'Oh,' she said, 'in the offertory. Most of the farmers stay away on the first Sunday in the month, because of the collection. What do you give? A threepenny bit?'

Then Joe laughed, a queer dry laugh, as if he had never laughed before, and was trying a new acquaintance.

'You do not understand me. I do not mean the giving of money.' He had become serious again.

'It is a pity,' said Trip, 'that there are not smaller silver bits coined than threepence. Then the farmers might come, and not stay away on the first Sundays of the month because of the collection.'

Then Joe caught the face of Trip between his floury hands, and held it up and shook it, and laughed again, and then became very grave, and said, 'Oh, Little Tu'penny! Little Tu'penny! would that the minting and the making of you were in other hands than they are; then a bit of shining coin would, indeed, be struck out of poor little wasted Tu'penny.'

IV.

HOW SHE WAS SPOILED.

MRS. REDFERN never again visited the miller's cottage; she never after that complimentary call spoke to Mrs. Western with patience. She had taken a strong and bitter dislike to the harmless old widow. And it must be admitted that she had a grievance against her. Mrs. Western had deprived her of the power or inclination to employ a certain word again which had at one time dropped pretty freely from her lips. The rebuff of the widow had cut her to the quick, and she felt her gorge rise against the old woman whenever the opportunity came to her to use that same serviceable word, and she was constrained to suppress it and substitute for it another word less expressive and less emphatic.

But the keeper, when he knew what Joe had done, held out his hand to him frankly and

thanked him, and sent him a brace of rabbits, and offered him a day now and then with him ferreting and shooting. Domestic servants and out-of-door retainers are alike in this: they are most generous with their master's goods.

Joe did not accept the offer; he had not time to waste in sports, or, possibly, he had not much taste for them.

'Well, then,' said the keeper; 'I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll come with my dogs, and we'll have out and kill all the rats about your mill.'

This offer Joe gladly accepted.

The incidents recorded in the last chapters were the beginning of a friendly intimacy between Joe and Little Tu'penny. Indeed, Joe was the only person from whom Miss Triptolema Yellowleaf Redfern would endure to be called by this nickname; and perhaps she bore it from him because she recalled how he had associated it with a compliment about Two-pence and precious metal, which, however, she did not understand, and not understanding, supposed to be more fine and flattering than it was.

'Tu'penny, why are you not at school?' This

was on the morning of the rat-hunt. Trip had come to the mill to be present at it.

'Mr. Joe Miller,' answered she, 'mother has engaged a governess.'

Dick Redfern burst into a laugh.

'My missus,' explained he, 'is uncommon grand in her ideas. She's got a little girl, as hasn't passed her Third Standard, to come and teach our Trip, and calls her the governess. She's only thirteen. I don't approve, but can't help it. A woman must manage the girls. They're like snipe, fly queer, and it needs a sharp eye and a skilled gun to wing 'em.'

Then Joe's face darkened. He would not speak to Trip. He would not even look at her. She danced about trying to engage his attention; but he would accord her no notice. Presently she stole up to him when he was by himself, and said, 'What is the matter, Mr. Joe? Why are you cross with me?'

'You promised me to go to school, and you have not gone.'

She stood and looked at him, then turned and ran home.

'Mother,' she said, 'I won't have any governess.

Give me two pennies, I am going back to school; I'll forgive the master. Joe has shown me that he meant no harm when he called me names. Don't you see, mother, all the children pay a penny a week, and as I'm superior to the rest, he wants me to pay twopence. If in future I do that, it will be all right.'

'Ah!' said Mrs. Redfern, 'that will satisfy me. I couldn't think to have you, Trip, classed with all them brats of the village—little penny'ers. But if you pay twopence it will show you're of another and higher sort altogether.'

Then Trip took her twopence and hastened to the school, though late for the roll-call. As she went by the mill she pulled out her whistle and piped.

The terriers and spaniels were running about barking, driving the rats—the former at the holes and after the beasts on land, the spaniels plunging into the water after them. Dick, the keeper, had a sack with ferrets in it, with little jingles about their necks, that he might hear the creatures when underground. He held up his finger. He was kneeling by a bank, and the dogs were silent; he put his ear down to a hole.

Then Trip's whistle attracted Joe's attention, and he looked round. He saw her holding up her coppers—new, shining coppers—twopence—in the sun. She slipped her whistle into her pocket when she saw that he observed her, and danced down the road to school, clinking the pieces over her head.

Joe stood and looked after her, and the cloud went off his brow. There was good in that child; she was not utterly spoiled.

Unfortunately Mrs. Redfern's bad influence came into play again to counteract the good Joe had done. She told Trip that she would only allow her to remain at school till she had passed the fourth standard; after which she was to be her own mistress again, and was to learn nothing more than the piano and dancing.

This stimulated Trip to great activity. She was clever, learned quickly, and where she had a purpose, went through with it. That she had shown in the matter of sailing on the windmill-wings.

Now she worked hard, at the next examination did well, passed in the fourth standard well; she read intelligently, could write a neat hand, was fair at sums, but bad at needlework.

When the examination was over the holidays began, and it was a settled thing that her education was complete, at all events so far as the village school went. She was thenceforth more at home than ever with her mother, and her mother's mischievous influence affected her more than formerly. She listened to her mother's boastful talk, to the golden dreams of a splendid future painted by the silly woman to excite the vanity and ambition of her daughter. Her mother dressed her beyond her position, and spent an hour every day in doing up Trip's fair, abundant hair in divers fashions. She praised her child's good looks, taught her to be very careful not to contract freckles, and bade her, if she went out in the sun, keep her hands under her pinafore lest they should become burnt. She would not allow Trip to do any of the rough work of the house, lest it should spoil the texture of her hands; she bought a second-hand cottage piano, and engaged one of the mistresses of the school to give music-lessons to her child. She encouraged Trip to read romances. In a word, she laboured as hard as she could, quite unintentionally, with the best will in the world, to ruin Trip.

The father was easy-going, good-humoured, and laughed at his wife's proceedings. He took no steps to interfere with them in his daughter's behalf. The only good that the unfortunate girl got, the only seeds of principle sown in her, came from Joe Western.

It was a curious fact that Joe, so reserved and unsociable with his fellows, unbent to the girl. He did not grudge a talk with her, or the time spent in her society; he learnt to smile at her odd and audacious remarks. He even encouraged her to visit the mill. He knew that she got harm at home. He knew that she had alienated the girls of her own age, her former associates, by her conceit, and he hoped to be able to supply some little check to the mischief which was going on. When the sails were in full swing, and Trip was being made giddy, he had put on the drag and saved her; perhaps now he might do something of the sort morally. I do not know that he thought this all out for himself, but a dim sense of pity for the child filled him, and a desire to befriend and better her was like a warm spark in his heart.

One evening his mother said to him, in reference

to Trip, who had been into the cottage to beg for bread and honey, 'It is a sorry look-out for the little lass. With a careless father and a foolish mother, she will go utterly to the bad in the end. I see it all before me. It cannot be other. As you bend a plant so it will grow. What are you sighing about, Joe?'

'Sighing, mother? I'm blowing the flour out of my lungs.'

Next day he was not in his usual amiable frame of mind when the girl appeared in the mill-door, a lovely apparition, dark against the brilliant sky behind, standing on one leg, with a hand on each door-post, looking in and singing. His gray eyes rested on the graceful figure. The face was in shadow because a sunlit white cloud was behind it, and he blew the flour again out of his lungs.

She continued warbling, standing on one leg.

'Hush!' said Joe, starting to the stairs. 'There is the bell ringing; the hopper is empty.'

When Joe had gone aloft, Trip produced her whistle and piped. He did not come down till he had filled the hopper. Then he descended leisurely. He found the girl seated on a flour sack, pouting.

'You care for the hopper more than for me,' she said; 'when the hopper rings you run up to it, when I whistle you will not come to me.'

'Because I am really needed at the hopper; as I have already told you, when you *really* need me, I will come to you.'

'If I whistle?'

'Without your whistle. When you were flying, or, rather, falling, you did not call me, but I came.'

'Yes—at the right moment, dear Joe.'

'At the right moment, never fear, if I can, I will always come to you.'

'How will you know?'

'Know!' he repeated, and considered. 'I cannot tell; but I think, somehow, I shall always feel if you are in trouble, or danger, and that you want me.'

She sat on the sack, thinking, with her finger on the dimple in her cheek, and he looked at her, not without sadness on his brow.

All at once she brightened, turned her dark eyes on him, and said, 'Miller Joe, you are going to let this sack down into the basement. It is on the trap. Give me a ride down.'

He shook his head. He took her hand and

lifted her from the sack, and made her stand on one side.

'Run down, little woman, below. The sack, it is true, is going to be let by the trap into the basement, but never, and in no way, will I let you down. Go below and stand on the trap, and when the sack is removed I will haul you up.'

She went out at the door, ran down the steps, and presently he saw her through the hole in the roof of the weighing-house and floor of the flour-chamber, holding the chain of the lift, and looking up. He heaved, and she mounted, with bright up-lifted face and fluttering white hair, and smiles in her dancing eyes. Then he knelt, put out both his hands, and lifted her on to the floor and closed the trap.

'So, Little Tu'penny!' he said. 'Never will I let you down; too many who know no better are doing that with you. I will always put out my hands and help you up.'

But she understood nothing of his meaning. How should she? She was but a child.

V.

HOW SHE WOULD COME.

Not long after this, Triptolema fell ill with typhoid fever, and was so ill that for a day or two her father and mother were in great anxiety about her. There was no doubt as to how she had got the malady. Mrs. Redfern, with her high and painted notions of life, had neglected obvious duties; had not cared to keep the house sweet and wholesome; accumulations of old vegetables and the dead meat for dogs had been left to fester together and poison the water in the well and the atmosphere of the house. She received a sharp reprimand for her negligence from the doctor who attended her daughter; but Mrs. Redfern was not one to take a scolding to heart and profit by it. 'He ain't a gentleman,' was her comment, 'or he wouldn't have spoken to a lady so.'

The house was avoided by almost everyone when the child was ill. Not a servant from the Hall was allowed to approach it, and inquiries were made of the father by shouts from a distance. Joe became very uneasy when he heard of Trip's illness. He went regularly to the keeper's cottage daily to inquire; sometimes he went there twice a day, and sometimes at night he prowled about in the park near the house, looking up at the lighted window where she lay, and in his heart praying that the poor little foolish life might be spared, yet always with the misgiving whether it would not be better for Trip to be taken away from the wretched influences about her, and from a future of sorrow to which they were directing her.

'What are you a-beating of your head for?' asked Mrs. Western.

'I'm trying to consider whether I can't think of something that may do her good.'

'Do whom good?'

'Little Tu'penny.'

'Why, Joe, she has the best advice; and, for the matter of that, perhaps it is just as well if she were removed; for, mark my words—sure

as eggs are eggs and are not codlin apples—she'll go to the bad if she lives.'

So his mother spoke out the same thought which he had himself hardly allowed to become articulate in his mind.

'Mother,' he said, with a troubled face, and with a strange jerky manner, 't'other day I found a little coin in the garden.'

'I know you did. It was worth nothing, black as the chimney.'

'Look here, mother.' He opened his purse, and drew out a piece of silver. 'I've had it in my hands, and rubbed it, and smoothed it, and have rubbed and smoothed away all that made it black, and there is the pure beautiful metal underneath. It is the same with Tu'penny.'

'It may be,' answered his mother. 'But then, she won't be in your hands to burnish, but is sure to fall into hands that's blacker.'

Then he went out, and beat his brow; and as it was night, walked to the park, and went in at the gates, and along the side-road to the keeper's lodge, and stood looking up at the lighted window, rubbing his coin between his palms: and the more he rubbed the brighter it became.

'Hullo, Joe! Is that you?'

He started. Dick the keeper put his hand on his shoulder.

'Yes, it is I, Mr. Redfern. How is Trip?'

'Better. The doctor says there is a turn, and we need have no more fear. I am glad. I was mighty proud of the little creature, and would have missed her more than if I'd lost four of my best dogs.'

One bright still summer day, as Trip was convalescent, Joe arrived at the door of the keeper's cottage leading his donkey—the gray mill donkey, with a pretty little new side-saddle on it. Trip was at the window, and she clapped her hands and danced. Then Mrs. Redfern came out.

'I've brought neddy,' said Joe in an ungracious tone. 'I thought it would do the little girl good to have a ride.'

'But'—Mrs. Redfern hesitated—'on a donkey is not very genteel.'

'It will be good for her health.'

'That may, perhaps, be taken into consideration. Indeed,' said Mrs. Redfern, after a moment's thought, 'I've heard that some of the quality have drunk ass's milk; and if they have

done that, it can't be very degrading to mount the back of a donkey.'

Triptolema was eager for a ride. She put on her little straw hat, and Joe helped her into the saddle. How light she was after her illness!

Mrs. Redfern stood in the door watching her daughter as she departed. 'Ah!' said she; 'some day it won't be a neddy: it will be a charger she'll ride.'

Joe walked the ass. A man who accompanies a horse or a pony goes by the head, but he who attends the proverbially obstinate animal has to keep in the rear. He did not talk. He looked at Trip as she rode. A bit of scarlet cloth was thrown over the gray donkey under the saddle.

'Joe,' said Trip, 'what a nice saddle! Where did you get it?'

'I bought it.'

'What for? Does your mother go out on the neddy?'

'No.'

'Did you buy it for me?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, how kind and good you are! Then I may often go out rides on the donkey?'

'Yes; when he is not wanted for the mill.'

She pouted. 'I always come last,' she said. 'That precious mill first, then, long after, come I. If I very much desired to ride on a lovely day, and there was an order for bran for the parson's pig, I must give up my ride, I suppose. The pig first, then I.'

'Yes; the pig needs its food, and must be attended to.'

'And I need my ride. I suppose, if the parson's pig were ill, you would consider it a great deal more than you consider me.'

As she was convalescent, she was petulant. Joe made no reply, but beat the ass to make him go quicker.

'Joe,' she said, 'when I am well, and grown up, and have become a grand lady, and wear pink silk and a beautiful-lined sunshade with a lace fringe to it, and have my own carriage with a pair, and coachman and footman, and armorial bearings and a cockade, I'll drive up to the steps that lead to the mill whenever I like, whenever the day is lovely, and insist and take you out a drive; and I shan't consider anyone else—certainly not a parson's pig—but make you come out with me,

and breathe the fresh air, and enjoy the sun, and show you the world.'

'And I tell you,' said Joe, again beating the neddy, and this time savagely, 'that if you do ever come up in carriage and pair, and liveries, and cockades, and servants, and all that, I'll not go out with you—no, I will not.'

'Not if I asked you very prettily?—not if I desired it very much?'

'No!' with a roar.

She looked back over her shoulder. Her delicate face was thin, and she seemed very fragile and infinitely lovely and to be pitied and cherished and sheltered and humoured after her illness; and as Joe looked up in her face and saw the large dark eyes—so very large, and the dark rings about them—his heart grew soft, and he lowered his eyes to the back of the ass.

'Joe!' she called.

'Yes, Trip.'

'Joe, come up beside me.'

He came hesitatingly.

'Joe, I have made you angry or unhappy. Why do you look at me as you did just now? What have I said that was wrong? What have

I done to offend you? Joe, dear Joe, don't be cross with me!'

She put out her arms and put them round his neck, and as she was weak with her illness, she began to cry; and she put her cheek beside his, and the tears ran from her eyes on to his cheek. The ass stood still; and Joe stood holding her, she still seated in the new saddle, but leaning off and clinging to him, and he holding her lest she should slip off, and looking away beyond her at the horizon, where the London smoke rose as a belt of fog, and dulled the brilliancy of the day.

She speedily recovered herself, and resuming her balance on the saddle, said:

'Well, Joe, take me to the mill. I must go there again, to the dear, dear mill. It is like a home to me.'

'Yes, Trip; you may always come there and find a home when you come on foot, or come riding an ass; but in a grand carriage, and—gay silk and feathers, and with servants—never—never!'

PART III.

I.

OF CAUTIONS GIVEN.

As a child, her mother's talk had not taken great, though it had taken some, hold of Trip, but as she grew out of childhood it fired her imagination.

She had been so nursed in the notion that she was to have a grand future, and that the only way in which this grand future was to be secured was through a grand marriage, and the only way in which a grand marriage was to be arrived at was by personal adornment, the cultivation of complexion and hair, and by coquetry, that as Trip grew into young womanhood she qualified for it with even greater eagerness than she had qualified before for idleness by passing the fourth standard. A life of luxury and extravagance, of wearing fine dresses and of seeing sights, of being admired,

and of doing nothing, was held up to her as the reward for passing the fifth standard. That fifth standard was the captivating and catching of a wealthy husband.

In spite of the deterioration of her character, in spite of her mother's remonstrances, the friendship with Joe Western was not broken; it lasted on with fluctuations, it lasted in spite of Joe's ill-humour and her provocations, that ill-humour in Joe being the result of her provocations.

But good there was, lying deep below the surface, buried under a wonderful accumulation of frippery and folly.

They had their quarrels, when Trip bounced out of the mill, vowing she would never again revisit it, because Joe was glum and had not a word to cast at her; or when Joe, angered at some foolish remark or exhibition of petulance, gave her a sharp reprimand. Sometimes these quarrels lasted a week, once or twice, a month, when they neither met nor spoke. Reconciliation always came from the side of Trip. Joe never sought her out; but when she reappeared, penitent, with downcast head, pitiful entreaty to be forgiven, and pleading eyes, he could not resist

the appeal. They shook hands, and were friends again.

'My dear Lema,' said her mother, 'I don't half like you to see so much of Mr. Western. He may be, and no doubt is, a respectable young man, though he did not let his father's watch run down when he died. That will always stand against him. But respectability is not what we look at; we look miles beyond that. So, my dear Lema, give him no encouragement. If ever it should happen that he persuaded you to become Mrs. Joe Miller it would bring my gray hairs—no, they are brown, and not gray yet—with sorrow to the grave.'

'Mamma! What a comical idea! Joe!'

'Let it remain an idea, and a comical one, Lema. As an idea only it is like cold water trickling down my backbone. My dear, if you were to be such a fool as to take Mr. Joe Western, I'd wash my hands of you. Flying would be as out of the question as when the wings are clipped. You'd stick to the soil. I'll tell you exactly what it would be like. I was once at a show—a sort of mixed circus and menagerie—and it was advertised and given out in public that an elephant

was to ascend in a fire-balloon. Well, I s'pose pounds was took at the door of people that went in to see. I went in. True enough, there was the elephant, and there was the fire-balloon. The balloon was hooked on to a belt—a very ornamental belt it were, of all the rainbow colours—passed round the body of the elephant. There was a catch at the top, and into this catch went an iron hook from the bottom of the balloon. Well, Lema, a fire of tow and spirits of wine was lighted in the balloon, and I will say this for the balloon, I believe it did its best to rise, but it couldn't, because of the elephant. It could neither lift the great beast nor rise itself. So at last the cord was cut, and away flew the balloon without him, and we looked after it till it was no more than like a star in the sky. But the elephant didn't budge an inch, not he. He didn't even look up after the balloon.'

'Where did it come down, mamma?'

'Oh, I don't know, nor whether it ever came down at all. They ought to have returned us our coppers as the elephant didn't go up, but you may be sure we got nothing back. Now, my dear Lema, true as I stand here, that was a pictur' of

an unequal match. So never you think of taking and fastening of yourself on to any elephant; you're a fire-balloon, and ordained to rise to be a star.'

Much about the same time Mrs. Western was addressing a word of caution to her son.

She had watched Joe for long with the anxiety of a mother and the perception of the loving eye. At one time he seemed to be escaping from his silent ways to become more genial and sociable; but of late his curious closeness had closed over him again, and had become more confirmed and intensified.

Something weighed on his mind. His mother was sure of that; but what it was she did not at once discover. For a time she suspected that the business was not prospering, that his accounts had not been paid to Christmas, that something was wrong with the machinery of the mill that would entail a heavy outlay which he did not know how to meet, that custom was falling off—but she abandoned all these suppositions; there was no evidence to substantiate them, and the man was able to satisfy her that everything went well with the mill.

What was the matter with Joe?

The clouds that had hung as a haze about his boyhood had lightened for a while and promised to disperse, then had settled down into darkness. At one time he had smiled, even laughed; but now his face was uniformly grave, and a line as of pain was formed on his brow. When unobserved, Mrs. Western watched her son; she saw that thoughts were working and troubling his brain. His cheek twitched and his eye lightened, then darkened, and he leaned his head on his hand, pretending to be engaged on his accounts, but without fixing his eyes on his ledger. He went about his work with regularity. He ate, he slept, dug in his garden, attended to the mill and to his bees, made up his accounts, went to church, with system, as a machine; but of the brightness of youth, of its fluctuations of temper, there was nothing in him. He read, he thought, but he did not talk, and he sought no amusements. Her son's soul was a sealed letter to Mrs. Western.

She observed that his fits of deepest depression, accompanied by nervous twitchings of the muscles of his face, and the expression of greatest suffering on his face, occurred after his interviews with

Trip. Nevertheless, she did not arrive at the right solution even then. It seemed to her prepossessed mind that Joe would never care for any girl who was not as grave, sedate, and systematic as himself. That so frivolous, inconsiderate a coquette as Trip should have seized on her son's heart was inconceivable by her for long. She resisted the thought—she fought against evidence when it came on her. No; Joe was ill, he was suffering from some internal malady.

She asked him if he had any illness hanging about him; anything the matter with his liver? He shook his head and answered, 'I am quite well, mother.'

'Have you been chipping the stones, and the grit got into your lungs, Joe?'

'My lungs are sound,' he said.

'And there's nothing the matter with your heart?' she asked.

Then he stood up, shaking his head, and went out to his bees.

She watched him through the window. She saw him presently standing looking at his hand and squeezing it. She went after him into the garden.

'What is it, Joe?'

'A bee has stung me, that is all. I have drawn out the sting. It will hurt no more.'

'Will you have the blue bag for it, Joe?'

He shook his head. 'No; when the sting can be drawn out the hurt is soon over. It is where the sting goes deep and remains that it rankles and aches and poisons the blood.'

He was not thinking of the bee. She was sure of that. He spoke of another sting. Her eyes were opened. She saw all plain. Then her face became very grave.

'Now, Joe,' she said, 'put the thought from you. It never can be. She is not the sort of wife for you—with such an unreasonable name, too. Triptolema Yellowleaf! It would give me the bronchitis to call her by it every day.'

'Mother—O mother!'

'It is of no use your "mothering" me. I can see. I know what consumes you. You love her because she is beautiful and winning. I don't deny all that; but she is not for you. If you had her, you would be utterly miserable.'

'I know it.'

'Yes, Joe, you know it; and yet you love her,

that is it. Your reason says that she would drive you mad if she were yours, and make your home a hell, and yet you have not the moral courage to think no more of her. 'You think of her all day and all night—when you work, when you pray, when you dream.'

He put his hand to his heart.

'Then, Joe, pluck the sting out—pluck it out and cast it away.'

'Mother, I cannot; it is too deep. It poisons me, that is true—but—I cannot! Indeed, I cannot!'

II.

HOW THE CHANCE CAME.

THERE was a small inn, called the Dog and Pheasant, between the park and the mill. Sometimes, when many visitors were at the Hall, the servants who could not be accommodated in the house were sent to the Dog and Pheasant. It was a tidy, respectable, old-fashioned inn, low, yellow-washed, with russet tile roof, and a vine, a Black Hamburgh, trained on a trellis over the roof, where it ripened well in warm summers. The host had been butler to the old Squire before the property was sold to the successful Oxford Street tradesman. However much the host might turn up his lip of scorn in the privacy of his own room with his wife over these *parvenus*, he was most urbane and obsequious to them in public, for Mr. Tottenham was his landlord, and the Hall brought a good deal of custom to the Dog and Pheasant.

Throughout the neighbourhood of London, the old families have well nigh disappeared. They have migrated, and sold their estates and mansions to wealthy tradesmen, who live in the old seats in far grander style than did the plain country squires.

Ringwood had belonged to the family of Ringwood for three hundred years; then came a spendthrift, then rash speculation, bad times, finally a break-up. Squire Ringwood was obliged to sell his ancestral estate and manor house, and it was bought by the Tottenhams, of the firm of Tottenham and Sons, Oxford Street.

Mr. Tottenham *père* was entirely a self-made man, a plain man, who never put an 'h' where it ought to be, but had always known where to place an investment. At the time of our story he was vastly wealthy, with a house full of pictures, mostly bad, china, modern and ancient, or imitation ancient, and abundance of heavy silver plate. His wife and daughters possessed thousands of pounds' worth of jewellery; his cellars were full of the most costly wines. The Tottenhams were indeed rolling in money, and hardly knew how to spend it all. They went out in ostentation, as

being about the only way in which they could go out. They gave sumptuous dinner-parties, garden-parties, and balls, at which no expense was spared to make them finer than those given by other *parvenu* families round, and quite unapproachable by any of the old gentry who here and there hung on, as the last leaves on a tree bursting for a fresh spring.

The tenants found that a great difference was made by the change of masters. Mr. Tottenham was a keen man of business, and he looked upon his investment in land from an entirely business point of view. He was not to be humbugged. The tenants soon accommodated themselves to the new order, and did not respect Mr. Tottenham the less for his seeing straight through them, discounting all they said, and exposing their dodges. Here and there, as already said, a few of the old gentry lingered on like fly-blown sheep, which lie down and allow themselves to be eaten up till they expire, without making an effort to resist and shake the maggots off. But it was quite another thing with the new people fresh from trade: they could not see their way to being fly-blown—they could not accommodate themselves to being eaten up alive.

One day there arrived at the Dog and Pheasant a gentleman of engaging exterior and manners. He wore a black frock coat that fitted him admirably, lavender pants, and kid gloves, a crimson ribbon round his throat, a Gloire de Dijon rose in his button-hole. His name—he showed his card—Mr. Algernon Beaufort. He had a delicate complexion and a slight cough. He came into the country because he had been ordered country air, and to Ringwood because Ringwood was prescribed as specially salubrious.

He strolled about the neighbourhood for a day or two, and found it dull—an endless tract of London clay, broken by old tile-pits and puddles. In time one may have too much of a good thing. It takes very little time to have enough of London clay.

Mr. Beaufort, standing in the bar, drawing on his gloves, with his elegant lavender legs wide apart, asked if it were permissible for strangers to stroll in the park. The host of the inn hesitated. It was not a favour generally accorded, but if the gentleman would not mind taking a message of thanks from him to the keeper, whose lodge was in the park, for a brace of rabbits he had sent the

missus, it might serve as an excuse. Then Mr. Beaufort could look about him, and see the trees, and the deer, and the lake; and the keeper might, perhaps, take him over the warren.

Mr. Beaufort was much obliged. His Gloire de Dijon was faded, so he ventured to beg a China rose of the landlady, which suited his complexion better even than the Gloire de Dijon, assumed his highly-polished hat, curled up at the side, took his cane, lighted a cigar, and sallied forth. He entered the side gate of the main entrance, sauntered about the well-wooded grounds, came to the keeper's lodge, delivered his message, and asked to be allowed to sit down and drink a glass of water. His appearance, his complexion, his address, struck Mrs. Redfern as aristocratic. She made him very welcome, entered into conversation with him, assured him that her marriage had been a come-down in life, and that, though she lived under a cottage-roof, she knew what good society was, having lived in baronial halls. This was a little bit of an exaggeration, but it did not matter. Baronial halls—even when converted, by an infirmity of the speaker, into 'alls—sounds well.

Mr. Beaufort assured the lady that he quite believed it. Something in her speech and bearing had struck him as out of the common when he first saw her. Then she told him how she had acquired her finished address and polite bearing. She had been lady's-maid to the Misses Tottenham, of the great house, one of whom was now married. The other was still single, but said to be engaged. It was a sad blow, she said, to old Mr. Tottenham that his eldest son had married an actress; he was not allowed to remain in the firm. He was given an annuity, and did not come to Ringwood.

'And this, sir,' she said, as Trip appeared—'this, sir, is my daughter.'

'Your sister, surely!' exclaimed Mr. Beaufort, starting to his feet and bowing gracefully, with a wave of his hat.

'My daughter, an only child, sir, aged eighteen.'

'Impossible, madam!'

'Pray be seated,' urged the flattered Mrs. Redfern. 'If I might offer you some of our modest ale and humble cake, sir, or unpretentious biscuits——'

'With the highest pleasure. My name—I ought to have introduced myself—is Beaufort;' he put a card on the table. 'You may chance to know the name; if you study the peerage, you will have observed that there is a duke of my name.'

Mrs. Redfern was giddy with excitement. She whispered to her daughter "Lema, put on your myrtle-green with coffee trimmings; in it you look beautifullest.' Then she hastened to produce cake, biscuits, glasses, and a jug of ale, and place them on the little table under the balcony of the picturesque cottage.

'I hope this is not too draughty a place, sir; our parlour is at your disposal, Mr. Beaufort.'

'Not at all; this is charming—idyllic.'

'I hear you cough, sir; I hope, Mr. Beaufort, no pommelary delicacy.'

'Indeed, I am sorry to say I am not strong in the chest. I have been ordered by my physicians to the air and quiet of the country, and Ringwood was specially recommended because of the ozone which is there.'

'The—the what?' asked Mrs. Redfern, much puzzled,

'The ozone that can be inhaled here. Inhaled —you understand—breathed.'

'Oh! here?'

'Yes. To make it plain to you, madam, just as cod-liver oil is swallowed, so is ozone inhaled.'

'Oh, I know that people of the first quality take cod-liver oil—my young ladies took it.'

'Exactly.'

'And I suppose people of quality breathe the other thing.'

'Precisely. All people of fashion inhale ozone.'

'I'll have a bottle made up at the chemist's for Lema,' said Mrs. Redfern grandly.

After a pause, and the eating of a biscuit, Mr. Beaufort said:

'So you, my dear madam, were lady's-maid at Ringwood. A position of great responsibility—next to that of the butler, *the* most.'

'Responsibility!' exclaimed Mrs. Redfern, 'I should think so. I've had thousands of pounds' worth of jewelry pass through my hands. My young ladies were awful careless, and left their brooches, and bracelets, and necklaces about. I've had times out of mind to put them away for

them. I didn't think it right that they should be left littering anywhere.'

'And where did you put them away, madam?'

'In morocco cases, locked in a jewel-box, which was kept in the wardrobe. But there is not quite so much now as was, as the eldest of the young ladies is married, and took hers away with her.'

'I suppose the plate of the family must be superb?'

'Soup-erb ain't the word for it,' said Mrs. Redfern. 'It is, as one may say, enter-meats, horse-duffers, all kinds of courses and desert-berb; because, you understand, they have plate for all and everything, even silver marrow spoons, which are never used.'

'What sort of a gentleman, now, is the butler?'

'Mr. Thomson. Oh, polished as his plate.'

'Would it be possible for me to see over the house? I am thinking of building Beaufort Court in Gloucestershire, and am interested in gentlemen's places. One can take hints everywhere I find, that is, if one has an intelligent mind.'

'Well, sir, Ringwood ain't generally shown; there's generally some of the family here, though they do go to London a deal. The ladies find it

dull in the country, and the old gentleman has been so much in business all his life, that he must be doing something in his old age, so they make over to him the hosiery branch of the affair. But I dare say the house might be looked over. The family are mighty proud of their pictures, painted by the most d——, I mean fashionable, artists, and which have cost the old gentleman pounds on pounds. Come here, Triptolema. My daughter and I will be pleased to walk with you, sir, to Ringwood. Mrs. Podgings, the housekeeper, is a very superior person, and eager to oblige me. Mr. Thomson, I have no doubt, will allow himself to be coaxed into letting you have a peep at the plate.' Then, aside to her daughter, 'My dear, go on with the gentleman. I will follow. The opportunity has come. Now is your chance. Lay hold.'

III.

HOW SOME ONE SEIZED A CHANCE.

'MR. BEAUFORT,' said Mrs. Redfern graciously, 'would you mind stepping on with my daughter? I'll follow directly. I'll just first slip on my seal-skin and hat.'

She allowed Triptolema to go most of the way with the stranger. Trip looked charming; her colour was heightened. Her mother's words had kindled her fancy. The gentleman at her side was good-looking, faultlessly dressed, polished in manner, presumably rich—he talked of Beaufort Court which he is rebuilding, and a man cannot build without money—certainly well-born. He had a Duke in his family. That was better than a Bart. Trip put on her best graces; and when Trip wanted to be gracious she was irresistible.

Mr. Beaufort chatted pleasantly, admired every-

thing, had flattering remarks to make to his companion, with whom he was really struck.

Ringwood House was of red brick, a large, stately mansion, with long windows, plaster quoins, plaster cornices, and vases and balustrades, which looked well with the old red brick.

Mrs. Redfern came up with her daughter and Mr. Beaufort before they reached the back door.

'Dear me!' said the gentleman, 'this strikes me as the perfect ideal of a house. If the interior arrangements are equal to the exterior perfection, I shall take a notion or two away with me. For my part, I like neither comfort sacrificed to architectural design, nor architectural beauty neglected for internal comfort. I shall be most interested to see over this house.'

The housekeeper, Mrs. Podgings, was accommodating. She liked to have a chat with Mrs. Redfern. The butler was gracious; he had a liking, indeed an unbounded admiration, for Trip, and vowed he only wished he were ten years younger to make her Mrs. Thomson. Whereat Trip was wont to toss her pretty head.

The gentleman was invited along with the ladies into the butler's private room. He must

insist on their all returning there after having been over the house and inspected the pictures. He trusted a light refection there would be acceptable all round.

So Mrs. and Miss Redfern and Mr. Beaufort started on their round, conducted by Mrs. Podgings. Fortunately the family were out, the house was accessible in all parts. Mrs. Redfern was anxious to see all the old rooms again she had known so well, and engage Mrs. Podging's attention while the young people talked together. Mr. Beaufort was enchanted with everything. He admired the paintings, the porcelain, the glass, the curtains, carpets, furniture,—everything was in admirable taste, and most expensive.

But what fascinated him more even than the pictures and china was the perfect arrangement of the house—so compact, so comfortable. He must ask permission to be allowed to make a few rough sketch-plans in his pocket-book for his information and guidance in the erection of Beaufort Court, Gloucestershire. The permission was at once accorded him, and, pencil in hand, he drew plans, and was too engrossed in them to say much to Trip.

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At last, when all had been seen, the party returned to the butler's room, where he had for them a bottle of dry Sillery. Some had been drunk at dinner the evening before, and a bottle had been reserved by the butler for his own particular friends.

'Celery,' said Mrs. Redfern, misunderstanding the butler (she was not up in the names of wines). 'Lawk! How fashions do alter, and how we must educate and educate to keep up to the times. Before I was married—and it is so still with the inferior classes—we used to eat celery with bread and cheese. How you manage to drink it is a puzzle to me. But I've heard of wine made of rhubarb, and I suppose this is made in like manner of celery. Well, the world turns round, and where should we be, if we did not turn round with it?'

'Mr. Thomson,' said Trip, putting on her most coquettish manner, 'might Mr. Beaufort have a sight of the silver wheelbarrows?'

'Barrows? Certainly,' answered the butler. 'Anything you ask, Miss, must be complied with.' Then, explanatory to the visitor, 'You see, sir, Tottenham began life with a wheelbarrow, some

fifty years agone, and as an occasion of telling the story, and showing how clever a man he has been, he has had two dozen little silver wheelbarrows made holding glass salt-cellars; a salt to each guest, you understand. At a dinner-party Tottenham never fails to tell the story *àpropos* of the cellars. He's had on the sides an inscription, "Propera," which, I take it, means "Shove along."'

'I don't think it,' interrupted Mrs. Redfern, 'though I'm sorry to differ from you, Mr. Thomson. How "Propera" can mean "Shove along" beats me. I see clear enough what it signifies. Proper A means A one, and Mr. Tottenham means that whatever he has, from his pictures, his plate, down to his dinner and salt, is A one, and nothing that isn't A one will suit him.'

'It may be, Mrs. Redfern,' said the butler blandly. 'But I take it the language is Latin. However, this is interrupting my story. The missus, she don't particularly like Tottenham boasting of his small beginnings, she is more high in her notions, and she always says an aside to the chief gent that took her in, "What Tottenham says must be taken, like the barrow, with salt.

He was a younger son, and the bulk of the property went to the eldest. He came off only with the barrow. That is what comes of our laws of primogeniture, which in a civilized and Christian land ought to be done away with."'

'And so they ought,' threw in Mrs. Redfern, 'because I don't understand nothing about them.'

'But,' continued the butler, 'about that inscription on the barrows. I know that Tottenham did not comb it out of his own head. He asked the Rector, who is an Oxford scholar, to help him. Propera is what it is. Now, Mr. Beaufort, you can help us to the meaning. "Shove along," *do* seem rather vulgar. What does it mean?'

'Sir,' said Mr. Beaufort, graciously, 'till I see the plate itself I can hardly decide between you and Mrs. Redfern. The letters may be Greek, or even Hebrew. Suppose you allow me to look at them?'

'Certainly, sir,' said the butler, rising, and taking his keys.

IV.

HOW ONE LOST A CHANCE.

MR. BEAUFORT'S visits to the cottage were daily, and Miss Trip wore her myrtle-green alternately with her sage-green gown, her first alternately with her second-best. Mrs. Redfern ordered her a third-best of crushed strawberry to be got ready as quickly as the milliner could make it. Crushed strawberry would crush the heart of Mr. Algernon Beaufort (with a Duke in the family), and bring him to the feet of Trip. But, indeed, Mr. Beaufort seemed ready to throw himself unreservedly at those pretty little feet, unbrought there by any crushed strawberry.

He was full of civility, and overflowed with compliments, which, though not original, were nevertheless acceptable. Of the gracefulness of his attentions there could be no question.

One day he brought Trip a bouquet—Mrs.

Redfern called it a 'bucket'—of stephanotis. He had sent to town for it, to Covent Garden, and he presented it as the fairest of flowers to the fairest of maidens.

On another occasion he gave her a box of bonbons with the equally feeble and worn compliment that he offered sweets to the sweetest.

One would hardly have supposed that any number of people could have been deceived by the appearance and address of this man. Yet Joe the miller, who saw little of him, was the only person who had any suspicion that he was not what he pretended to be. It is often asserted that the uneducated are keenly alive to real gentility, and able to detect what is spurious. I very much question this. I believe that they are easily imposed upon by mere brag; but I am quite certain that in the semi-educated class, such as servants, who ought, more than others, to be able to distinguish between the true and the false, the facility of so distinguishing is sometimes wholly absent. The criterion by which they judge is one altogether different from the determining faculty in the superior class. Contact with culture has confused their ideas, not cleared them.

It was speedily noised in the servants' hall at Ringwood and throughout the parish that the young man 'with a dook in the family' was paying his addresses to Trip. The butler, the cook, the housekeeper, and the upper-housemaid at the Hall thought it incumbent on them to encourage the courtship; it would add, as Mrs. Redfern said, 'a claw' (*éclat*) to Ringwood that a daughter of the Park, so to speak, should marry into the upper circle of the aristocracy. Moreover, Mr. Beaufort was much liked by the servants. He was full of anecdote, witticisms, scandalous stories about persons of title, all of whom he knew intimately, and to the truth of which stories he could testify.

'Your true blue-blooded aristocrat,' said Mr. Thomson, 'can descend to familiarities with us and lose nothing by it; but your *parvenus*, your wealthy tradesmen who've riz from a barrow to eat off gold and silver, they have to be mighty particular. They have to be with their dignity like a sailor with his pants, always a hitching of it up.'

So little collations were spread for the Redfern party and the stranger in the servants' hall—a cup of tea was always ready for them in the housekeeper's room when they walked to the House.

Mr. Beaufort and Trip sat beside each other at table, and a good deal of whispering went on between them, both at table and afterwards.

'Really, sir,' said the housekeeper, 'Mr. Beaufort, you're getting to know all about our Hall and its ways, as if you was the tame cat of the family.'

At last Mrs. Redfern announced she would invite the head servants to the lodge to supper.

'I'll call it an "at home," as more d——, I mean fashionable.'

'Well,' said her husband, 'if you do, let Joe Western have an invite also. He's a right good fellow, and I care for him a deal more than for your rigmaroling fop of a lordly swell.'

'Rigmaroling fop of a lordly swell!' echoed Mrs. Redfern. 'Well, I never! You are worse than a heathen, Richard; and Mr. Beaufort as is going to make a My Lady of our Lema. You ain't a-turning round with the world, that's clear, but are a-flying off it into nobody-knows-where.'

In spite of all her protestations and exclamations, the keeper insisted on inviting Joe. Joe was a right-down solid man, and Joe should come. He wasn't all varnish and Brunswick black, but true metal, and Dick only wished Trip would think of,

and take, the miller instead of the swell. So the keeper asked Joe Western himself, and, to his mother's astonishment, Joe consented to go.

Joe went, but he was not an agreeable person in society at any time—on this occasion least of all. He had only seen Mr. Beaufort at a distance hitherto, from the door of his mill, going along the road. Now he studied him with unfriendly eyes, with a scowl on his brow, and with his lips set.

Mr. Beaufort was uneasy. He whispered to Trip a question who he was, and seemed reassured when informed that Joe was the miller.

Joe scarcely ate, drank little, spoke even less. He sat and glowered first at Algernon Beaufort, Esq., and then at Trip. Not a muscle of his face moved; but the lines in his face became deeper, the brows more knotty, the lips tighter.

'Am I an object of such great interest to you, sir, that you cannot take your eyes off me?' asked Beaufort.

Joe made no answer; he seemed not to have heard the question.

'I object to be stared at,' said the gentleman. 'I am not accustomed to it in my position.'

Then the young miller stood up and walked to the door. Trip was just passing from the kitchen. Joe grasped her wrist as with a vice. She looked up in his face. It was no longer rigid, every muscle was working. He said in a low voice, 'Come outside to me, Trip—I must speak to you. I cannot bear more.'

'Go on,' she said; 'I will follow you, Joe.'

He went out under the trees. There were deer in the park; near at hand was a cluster of them browsing in the moonlight on the grass that was white, as if frosted with the heavily-fallen dew.

'What is it, Joe?' she put her hand on his shoulder. He was standing with his head down, looking at the deer.

'Trip,' he said in a voice that quivered with agitation; 'Trip, dear—dear Trip. We've known each other now for several years, and I fancy there's none in the whole world, not my mother even, I think of and care for as I do for you. Trip, I can't bear it. That man—I mistrust him. When I get a sack of corn, I take a handful and turn it over and look hard at it, and I know the quality of wheat flour as'll come of it. I've been

looking hard at him, harder than ever I studied a sample of wheat. The grain is bad. I don't believe in him. He may be a swell and a gentleman, and all that; but he'll make you miserable and break your heart, Trip, as sure as I stand here.'

'O fiddlesticks! Joe Miller. Whatever makes you talk to me like this?'

'I tell you why. Because—because you are dear to me. Because, Trip, if that man were to harm you, I'd kill him, if I were to swing for it.'

Such concentrated fury was in his tone as he uttered these words, that the girl was startled.

'How savage you are, Joe.'

'I'd be mad if harm came to you,' he answered. 'There's my mill, and my mother—those are all I've had to think of till you came, and I caught you when you tried a foolish flight. Take care—take care lest you try another.'

'Why do you speak to me in this way? You have no right. You are an old friend—that is all.'

'That is all. That is all, I suppose, I ever can be. But I care for you more than do your father and mother, and I would lay down my life for you. Beware of that man! Do not trust his words.

He is false; and, sure as I stand here, I'll make him regret he ever came here, if sorrow and heartbreak come to Little Tu'penny through him.' Then a gulp came in his throat, and he said no more.

'My good Joe,' said Trip, 'is this all you have called me out to hear?'

'All! yes,' he answered, turning to her again. 'No; it is not all. One thing more. I give you the chance, Trip. That I love you—love you with every string of my heart. You may not know, but it is true. And I know that if you were to take me, you would make me very wretched and break my heart. I know it. I see it written before my eyes in letters of blood. But here, knowing all this, I say to you, Take me—become my wife, and you shall have my faithful, best heart's love; do what you will, treat me how you will, I will love you and serve you till you have killed me. That is better than that you should take the fellow in yonder, who will break your heart and kill you with sorrow. I see what will come to you if you should love him and take him. You will be treated unkindly, then cruelly; you will be deserted and cast out; and my Little

Tu'penny—my little Tu'penny——.' His voice broke, he raised both his strong arms, folded them over his face, and walked up and down passionately, agonized, quivering in all his body.

Trip was in her crushed-strawberry gown, in the moonlight, without a hat, the silver light on her flaxen, lovely hair and her sweet face, that looked white in the moonbeams.

Then suddenly Joe the miller stood before her, and lowered his arms and held out his hands level before him, and looked her earnestly in the face. The light was not on him, his face was in shadow, but there seemed to be sparks of fire in his eyes.

'Trip,' he said in a rich, earnest, thrilling voice, 'come, put your hands in mine and take me. It is a queer courting. I ask you to take me and spoil my life. Better that than the other should spoil yours.'

The girl, giddy, little able to realise the depth and intensity of his passion, the greatness of his devotion, of his readiness to sacrifice himself for her, burst into a merry laugh. A quiver ran through him at the sound.

'Don't be angry, Joe,' she said; 'I could not help it. I was thinking of something mother said

of a fire-balloon hooked to an elephant. It can't be—no—Joe; we are not a match. You know it, and so do I.'

'Little Tu'penny,' said he sadly, as he dropped his hands and, with bent head, turned away; 'you are right, we are no match. But I gave you the chance, knowing what must come of it to me, and you have cast it away.'

PART IV.

I.

PAST RECALL.

JOE the miller walked away. He did not return, he did not look round again. Trip stood with folded hands looking after him. The muscles of her mouth were twitching with laughter. In the moonlight the merry dimples came into her lovely cheeks. What a droll idea of her mother that was of the balloon and the elephant.

But she was a little sorry that she had laughed aloud and hurt Joe's feelings. He was a good soul. Perhaps she might miss his friendship when she left that part of the country.

She was looking after him as he went along the drive, broad and white in the moonlight, with his hands joined behind his back and his head low down. He was a solidly-built young man. He

walked slowly, steadily, with firm tread. Every step was taking him further from her, not for that night, but for ever, so it seemed to her. The dimples went out of her cheeks, and she took one step forward as though to go after him, and a transient feeling woke in her heart that she had made a mistake in sending him away. But it was soon effaced, as writing on the sea-sand is effaced by the rising tide, for the next thought that swept over her mind was—she was born for better things than to be, as her mother said, a Mrs. Windmiller.

So faithful, so kind, so gentle, Joe had ever been to her, and to everyone else so inaccessible, so hard, and cold. Then a gush of warm, true feeling poured through her veins, and she cried out,

'Joe! Joe!'

The night was so still that he heard her, and stopped. She ran along the drive towards him, and he came walking back—not fast, not eagerly, as if expecting great things—but firmly, calmly, ready to accept what she was willing to give.

If he had run and thrown himself at her feet, perhaps she might then have accepted him; but

when he came trudging back so composedly, a revulsion took place in her feelings, and when they met she did not quite know why she had recalled him, nor what she wished to say. So she stood still, bent her head, and muttered,

'I'm sorry I called, I only wanted to say one thing: whether I leave Ringwood or whether I stay, you will let me sometimes come up the steps and go over the—the——' her heart became soft again for a moment, and tears were in her voice —'I mean, Joe, the dear old mill?'

'Is that all?' he asked. 'Yes, as long as I am there you can always visit it; but he, if he sets foot on the ladder, I'll fling him down.'

'You are not angry with me?' She looked up into his eyes furtively. She was playing with him, and yet she was half in earnest. She liked him, but she laughed at him—her elephant.

'Angry with you?' he asked. 'No, Trip, never. I have borne with much from you already. I have borne with you this evening, but I am not angry—only, Trip, so, so sorry.'

'We shall remain friends?'

'Always your friend, but not your friend's friend.'

'And, wherever I may be, you will think of me?'

'I never do other than think of you—think of you with such a pain and anguish in my heart that it is like some deadly disease which has taken hold of me and is consuming me.'

He spoke with averted head. He could not trust himself to meet her eyes.

'Is that all you have to say?' he asked, 'that you may still come and see the mill? That'—his voice quivered—'you may some day drive up to the steps in your grand carriage, with your coachman and footman in liveries, and your brass-mounted harness, and that you may get out of your carriage, dressed in pink silk, with gloves and rings, grand as the greatest lady, and so, so, with your parasol over your face, and hat and feathers—so, so, may come up and honour the poor—as you called him once—*dull* Joe Miller?'

Oh, foolish, unhappy Joe! Why did you speak in these terms? Why did you call up such a picture before the vain girl's mind's eye, and spoil your only chance of winning her, just as her heart was yielding?

Yet it was well, perhaps, that he did thus uncon-

sciously thrust her from him. They were not a pair, the elephant and the fire-balloon!

'Yes,' she said, 'that is *all*, Joe, that I had to ask. I called you back for nothing else.'

Without a farewell he turned and walked away; the same steady, heavy tread, in the same way, with his head bent down, and with his hands joined behind his back.

As he walked away she still stood watching him, and again did the same regret make itself felt in her heart. Her bosom heaved, her eyes filled, her breath came quick, and her fingers plucked at the fringe of her pretty light gown.

He was a dear old fellow—old—he was but young in years, though old in thought and feeling. Yes, she did like him. How would it be if she were transplanted to another part of England, and thrown among total strangers! How alone she would feel! How she would long for the wise head and the trusty heart of Joe! And now dimly she began to see that he had been a better friend to her than her mother. Her mother was urging her to sail on a wholly unknown sea, whereas she knew all about Ringwood and Joe. She knew how deep, how still, how stormless

was the Pacific Ocean of his heart, and what did she know of the character, of the temper, of the principles of Mr. Beaufort? Then she recalled Joe's words about her future with him. What if that forecast should prove true? What if, after all her mother's efforts and her own ambitious hopes, the end aimed at should prove a delusion? She did not in the least care for Mr. Beaufort. He flattered her vanity, but he had not touched her heart. He had laid hold of her by the worst fibres of her nature, whereas Joe held her by the few fine, subtle, good ones.

Then she cried out again, 'Joe! Joe!'

Perhaps he was too far away to hear her voice. He did not turn. He was further now than he had been when first called, and brought back.

She waited for him to halt in his walk. She waited in vain. Then she felt in her pocket; by some caprice she had slipped into it (for no reason that she could give) the whistle which he had made for her some years ago. She put it to her lips and whistled; whistled loudly, shrilly, and with all the strength of her breath.

Then she paused, and holding the whistle, waited. She waited in vain. Joe walked on.

He did not stop, he did not hesitate in his walk.

He knew her mood better than she knew herself. He had heard her call, he had heard the whistle, and he walked on.

Then the tears that had risen to her eyes became tears of mortified vanity, as they dropped from her lashes. She stamped her little foot on the gravel, and tossed her head. He did not really love her, if he would not return when she called. Was she not worth the trouble of retracing a few steps? Apparently he thought not. There were others who valued her higher.

At that very moment Mr. Beaufort was beside her.

'Miss Redfern,' he said, 'I heard your whistle, and the trusty canary has flown to your finger. I am here. Your mother has been asking for you, and I offered to go in quest. May I flatter myself that the whistle was to call me?'

She said nothing. She might be giddy, but she was not capable of a lie.

'This is a fine park,' said Mr. Beaufort, 'but you should see mine in Gloucestershire. This is small, mine covers three times the amount of land,

and my trees are finer, my deer more numerous and fatter.'

'What,' asked Trip, 'what are your liveries?'

'Buff and blue,' answered the gentleman. 'The Beaufort colours. The stockings of the footmen —white.'

'I heard some one say that your harness was brass-mounted.'

'Not at all. Silver-mounted, far more stylish. The Beaufort harness is all silver mounted. I could not differ from his Grace. It would not look well.'

'Have you many carriages, sir?'

'I have not counted. I believe I pay the two guineas tax for four, and how many drags I have for which I pay fifteen shillings, I really cannot say; I leave all that to my steward.'

'Is your house very fine?'

'I am rebuilding it in palatial style. The first architect of the day is employed on it. I am giving him *carte-blanche*.'

'Is it not rather dull in Gloucestershire?'

'I am in town for the season. Have you ever been to the opera? I wonder what Miss Tottenham would say to seeing you there in a box opposite her?'

'I am hardly likely to have the chance,' said Trip, and sighed.

'Will you not give me the chance of taking you there? I place my fortune, my mansion in Gloucestershire, my town house, my person, unreservedly at your feet. And'—he opened a morocco case, and drew forth a ring that sparkled in the moonlight,—'allow me to present you with this diamond ring, worth only a hundred and fifty pounds, as an earnest of my sincerity.'

Since Marguerite was tempted by the casket, what woman's heart can resist jewellery?

'Let us go in,' said Mr. Beaufort, 'and announce our engagement to your mother, the charming Mrs. Redfern.'

That night, when the guests had departed, Trip sat in her crushed strawberry on the side of her bed, a very woebegone figure, looking before her without seeing anything.

Then her mother came in. 'O my!' she said 'not gone to bed yet. What a blessing has come to-day. The crushed strawberry did it. Now we may sleep happy; your fortune is made.'

Trip started at her mother's voice, and when Mrs. Redfern came over to her daughter, Trip,

without rising, threw her arms round her mother's neck and burst into a storm of tears on her bosom.

'Mother, dear mother! I think I've made a dreadful mistake. I—I don't care for him, not a bit; and I do—I do love Joe Miller.'

'Fiddle-de-dee!' exclaimed Mrs. Redfern. 'Hoity-toity! Fortunate you have accepted Mr. Beaufort and taken his ring. You can't be off that. What! when you can fly as a fire-balloon, wish to grovel as a—as a—garden roller?'

'O mother! I don't want to be a fire-balloon.'

'Hoity-toity! Not to become a star? My dear, you've made your bed now, and must lie on it. The world turns, and we must turn round with it. The word that is spoken and the lover dismissed are past recall.'

II.

HOW SHE THREW HERSELF AWAY.

'THE marriage is actively to take place next Thursday,' said Mrs. Redfern, meaning, of course, 'actually.' Presents for the bride poured in from all her friends, Joe only excepted. Old Mrs. Tottenham, Miss Tottenham, Mr. Tottenham, the housekeeper, the butler, the maids, the lodge-keeper—all gave her presents, all personal ornaments, or bits of frippery wherewith to adorn her house, Beaufort Court in Gloucestershire, in process of erection.

Mr. Beaufort had a mansion in London, he said, in Piccadilly; and he proposed that after the marriage he should take his bride to Beaufort House, Piccadilly, and then make a tour with her in his yacht along the Norwegian coast; the fjords, the glaciers there were worth a visit, he said; and as Trip had never yet been abroad, he

ventured on a pleasantry, and said that this Trip should be with him. 'So, my dear Mrs. Redfern, you must expect no letter for a month or so. After our return we will communicate with you from Gloucestershire.'

'Lawk-a-biddy!' said Mrs. Redfern; 'don't there be any postal communications from Norway?'

'I only say that you must not expect any, and be agreeably surprised if you hear. You see, my dear mother-in-law elect, we shall be in our yacht, and may not come near a post-office—if post-offices exist in those parts.'

'I shall be afraid she'll suffer shipwreck; I've heard there's a great whirlypool in those parts. If you was to carry my Lema into that whirlypool, and she were sucked in, and sucked down, and never come up again, but all broken and done for, I'd cry my eyes out.'

Mr. Beaufort did not answer. Anyone who had watched his face at that moment would have observed a change in it. That he loved Trip was unquestionable. He was bewitched by her. He could not take his eyes off her when in her society, and whenever he could, he was in her society.

Was it wonderful? Such a charming, lovely creature as this sweet Trip of eighteen is not seen often in a lifetime. She was full of faults; but her very faults were engaging. One could see she was vain, and forgive it—she had a right to be vain; that she was a coquette, and pass it over—her coquettishness gave a piquancy to her beauty.

'Who would be his best man?' asked Mrs. Redfern, and, with a flutter of excitement, 'Would the Duke condescend to be present?'

No, his Grace would not. In fact, the family was much offended at the engagement. They regarded it as a *mésalliance*, they would not countenance it; that was why Trip had received no calls from any of his family—no notes, no presents, no notice whatever. However, argued Mr. Beaufort, when he introduced her all this miserable prejudice would melt away, the irresistible charm of her beauty and manner would win its way, and she would be received with affection.

Mr. Beaufort was very anxious to hurry on the marriage. His time, he explained, was precious; his yacht was ready, and he was desirous of seizing the most beautiful and suitable weather for his

honeymoon in Norway. So preparations were very hasty, a licence procured to obviate the delay of banns, and the landlord of the Dog and Pheasant was invited to act as best man.

During the time that intervened between the proposal and the marriage Trip was restless and excited. During the day the trying-on of her bridal-dress, the talk of her mother, the visits of friends, kept her spirits up; but at night, when alone, they sank, and she had many a cry in her little room. She did not care for Mr. Beaufort. Her heart was wholly untouched, only her ambition was roused and her vanity inflamed. There were two spirits in her—one that urged her on in the direction she was taking, the other that spoke in words of warning, to hold her back.

What did she really know of Mr. Beaufort? What was his character? She had not spoken with a single person who had known him before he came to the Dog and Pheasant. She could not wholly put away from her the words of Joe, expressive of his mistrust. He was jealous, she said, and that was why he spoke so strongly, and bitterly, and—unjustly. Nevertheless, there were times when a misgiving took possession of her,

and she feared the possibility of his words coming true in part. Mr. Beaufort might have a bad temper, might be jealous, might drink—be a gambler. There was no saying what his qualities were, as no one knew anything of his past, but what he chose himself to reveal.

Mr. Redfern did not interfere. Love-making, marrying, was woman's work, he said; the girl must suit herself; if the spark suited her, she was the person most concerned, and he was satisfied. Mrs. Redfern believed everything that Mr. Beaufort said, and did not dream of doubting it. She had long looked for this happy day, and now it was come. The right gallant inevitably turns up in fairy tales and novels.

But Trip had one friend who thought of all this, though he did not know how to help her—to help her against herself. He also asked himself again and again, Who is this Mr. Beaufort, who has a Duke in his family? It ought not to be hard to discover if there be a Duke of that name. After much silent pondering of the matter, he went to the parsonage with his little bill for flour and barley-meal in his hand. The Rector liked to have his accounts settled quarterly.

The Rector had a great respect for Joe, who was so steady a parishioner—never drank, and gave no trouble.

Joe received the money for his account, but did not leave at once.

'Please, sir,' said he, 'have you a book about all the lords and ladies in England?'

'Certainly, Mr. Western, you mean a "Peerage."'

'I'll tell you what I want,' said Joe, in his blunt, straightforward way. 'There's Trip Redfern is going to marry a Mr. Algernon Beaufort, who says there is a Duke in his family, and I want to find out if it is so.'

'Pshaw!' laughed the Rector, 'it is sure to be right. Beaufort—Duke. There is a Duke of Beaufort, but the family name is not Beaufort, but Fitzroy-Somerset. Here is the "Peerage," look for yourself.'

Joe looked at the book, turned the pages, and was more puzzled than before.

'Then those of the Duke's family are not Beauforts at all?'

'Certainly not; Fitzroy-Somersets. Did Mr.

Beaufort claim relationship to the Duke of Beaufort?'

Joe rubbed his head.

'That I can't say. All I know is, he told Mrs. Redfern that there was a Duke in the family.'

'He did not say what Duke?'

'I think not.'

Joe saw his only chance of finding out about Trip's intended husband disappearing.

'I fear I cannot help you. I do not know who can help you. But, my good fellow, every other person you meet pretends a connection with some peer of the realm; that is no new thing, though the connection may be hard to prove, perhaps impossible. But why are you particularly interested in the matter?'

Again Joe rubbed his head.

'Well, sir, Trip and I have been old friends, very fast friends, and Mrs. Redfern believes whatever she is told, and Mr. Redfern don't care, so Trip has no one to think for her welfare but me.'

The Rector shook his head.

'It is sure to be all right,' he said. He was a sanguine man. 'Don't you bother yourself. As

for the Duke in the family, I only hope it will not be Duke Humphrey, and that Trip will not be invited to dine with him.'

Joe did not understand the allusion. He walked back to his mill thinking, depressed, uneasy, and puzzled.

What more could he do? Nothing. He was impatient because he could do no more, and whilst he was turning over in his head how to find out the antecedents of Mr. Beaufort the marriage took place.

As the coachman with white favours drove the happy pair away from the keeper's lodge, past the windmill, the sails of which were flying briskly, a little hand was thrust through the carriage window, waving a white handkerchief—the handkerchief was not dry. Then a little face looked out, and looked up at the mill—a wistful face with very red eyes and quivering lips; and long after the carriage had passed, the same face looked back at the dear old mill.

Did Trip think that her friend Joe was at the door, or up at the window of the corn-chamber? She looked at one, then at the other, but saw no white head. Yet she thought he might have come

to the door to wave his cap to her. Surely he could not be so uninterested in her fortunes as not to leave his work for a moment to wish her God-speed? Surely he was not so unforgiving that he still harboured anger in his sullen heart against her—her who now looked up for his forgiveness?

Joe had seen her. He was not uninterested in her fortune. He harboured no anger against her. But he would not show himself. He stood back, with his arms folded over his breast, and his head down, and he had two lines on his cheeks from which the flour had been washed away. And hark! Tingle, tingle, tingle! The empty hopper is ringing, ringing, ringing, and still Joe stands with bent head and folded arms, and he does not hear the bell for once in his life, and the stones grind themselves and grind sparks out of their flinty ribs.

III.

HOW SHE BEGAN TO FIND IT OUT.

'Is it a long voyage to Norway?' asked Trip at last, timidly.

They were far from Ringwood, and Ringmoor Mill, and the little church and cluster of houses and elms of the village.

'We shall stay a bit in Lun'on,' he answered.

There was a change in her husband's voice, in his intonation, that surprised her.

'In your London house?'

'Ah!' he laughed. 'Well—yes, in my Lun'on house. Now, my dear Trip, don't you get the indigestion if the dinner is not as high seasoned as pleases your mother.'

'What do you mean, Algernon?' It was with an effort that she called him by his Christian name.

'You will find that out all too soon,' he replied,

somewhat uneasily. 'I am sorry, dear girl, that things will not be quite as you might wish. In fact, Beaufort House, Piccadilly, is in the hands of the house-painters, and the smell of the white lead is deleterious, so I have thought it as well to take lodgings.'

'But—we go to Norway to-morrow?' she said, looking round at him, and this was the first time she ventured to do so since she had stepped into the carriage with him. His face was troubled, he took her hand and kissed it, then looked out of the window.

'Norway must wait,' he said, with averted countenance.

Then he turned, and with a laugh said, 'Perhaps Jericho will suit you better.'

She could not make it out.

'I've been considering that, perhaps, you are a bad sailor, and would be upset at sea, and the barometer has been falling, and I see by the paper that the storm-signals are up, and so we had better postpone our departure.'

'Till the storm is over?'

'Oh, yes! till the storm is over.'

What was the meaning of the alteration in his

manner and tone of voice, even in the appearance his face wore? They were in the train. He made her get out at a station where there were branches and cross lines in all directions. They changed platforms, took fresh tickets, got out again—had a cab. Took the Metropolitan—then another cab, and at last drew up.

'Your lodgings seem very difficult to reach,' said Trip.

'They are sequestered,' he answered; 'more suitable for lovers.'

The house at which the cab deposited Trip and her husband was a small half villa at Lower Norwood, in a new road half made, and where the row of houses was only half built. The garden was uncultivated, a small patch in front of the door; the turf was not even green. The entrance door was fresh painted and stuck. When it was opened, admission was obtained into a small hall, so narrow that two could ill walk abreast in it. The mean stairs were steep and uncarpeted. There was accommodation only on one side—the right side of the house; a blank wall divided this half-house from the other half-house. There was a parlour on the ground-floor, and a small dining-

room in the rear, opening into a yard. The furniture was of the plainest description, and sparse. Only one servant appeared—an ill-favoured, elderly, small-pox marked woman.

Trip was puzzled and frightened, and very ready to cry. She was afraid to ask questions, and afraid to express her disappointment.

For supper, there were mutton chops and boiled potatoes, and cold rice pudding; no wine, but ale and whisky-and-water.

Certainly the style of living was better at Ringwood, though the Tottenhams did belong to trade, and had no pretence to a Duke in the family.

That Mr. Beaufort was very fond of Trip was the only reality of her dream, and it was the reality she could best have spared. She did not care for him; indeed, as her marriage drew on, she had felt a shrinking from him, and now that she was married, awoke to the fact that she disliked him.

There are some persons with whom you may pass a score of years, and whom you may meet every day, and yet you get no nearer to knowing them. You know their exteriors, every line of

their faces, every mole and blemish in the skin; you know their tones of voice, their walk; but you never get within, to know their true natures, to feel that you have touched a pulse—not a bit of cloth cloak or sable jacket.

There are other individuals whom we fear to look into. We know that some day or other the peep will be given, and we shall see what we had much rather not. We are glad to know their exterior only, and dread the day when they shall become transparent to us.

Some such feeling was in the heart of Trip. She began to fear her husband, to suspect that under the surface she would come on, not a hidden treasure, but dead men's bones and rottenness.

Day after day passed, and Trip was very dull. She asked if the Norway excursion were finally abandoned. He said it was so; but gave no reason. Had the storm that was expected missed its course? He did not know.

Were they going into Gloucestershire? He laughed at the question. The foundations of the house were not laid. The estate was in Cloudland.

Occasionally he took her out. Once to the Tower, once to the Crystal Palace; but he did not like visiting public resorts apparently, for he seemed uneasy when there, took no pleasure in the sights, and was impatient to get away.

Trip asked her husband if she might write home. As she was not going abroad, she would like to send a line to her mother. He peremptorily refused to allow her to write. 'Not for a month, mind you; your mother expects no letter, and will not be uneasy about you. Let her believe you are in Norway. What matters?'

'But why this mystery, Algernon?'

'Why—mystery?' he rubbed his chin. 'There is no mystery. You don't understand. I have objections. My friends and relatives may call, and I don't want 'em to come in and find your mother here. If you wrote, she'd be tumbling in with her stuck-up airs and grimaces.'

Trip was hurt.

'Why do you go out so much and leave me alone?'

'I have business, and business must be attended to.'

'What is your business?'

'Nothing that you can understand.'

'I insist on knowing,' said Trip with spirit.

He looked at her with surprise.

'Well then, I have political occupation, am secretary to a Liberal club; we have to work for elections, and see and arrange with agents, organise meetings, and so on. What do you know about politics? Are you much the wiser now?'

No; Trip had to admit that she was not.

Trip only half believed her husband when he said this. She was ashamed of herself for the mistrust which grew on her, and made her doubt everything he did say, and everything he had said to her. Not one of his promises had he fulfilled. His boastful words had been utterly false. He would not suffer her to leave the house by herself. He pretended that she would lose her way. But, she argued, unless she went out and about, and did lose herself occasionally, how was she ever to find her way at all? His hours were irregular and strange. He was out mostly at night, but not always; sometimes he had friends to see him on business—political business, he said, and they

spent the night with him and spirits and water and tobacco in the back parlour, the shutters of which were fastened.

After he had been out all night, he slept all day.

Trip was surprised at the amount of coal-ash which was left in the grate in the morning, after the party of politicians had sat up all night. She asked her husband how they had come to consume so much, and put the stove in such a mess. He turned off her question with a jest, that as they were all Liberals they had dealt liberally with the scuttle.

One morning, when in this room that looked out on the back premises, Trip found in the drawers a plan. She looked at it carefully and curiously, and was surprised to find that it was a plan of Ringwood Hall. She was convinced that it was so, all the rooms were arranged in the same order as those of the Hall. She took it to her husband.

'This is Ringwood,' she said.

He started. 'Where did you find it? What have you been about?'

'I found it in the back room. What is it for?'

'Oh, I took it when shown over the place. I said then it was for building purposes.'

'But you are not building in Gloucestershire, you have no Gloucestershire property.'

'Who told you that? How clever you are. I intend to build some day, so keep the plan by me.'

'This is not the plan you drew. That was in your pocket-book.'

'Well—I made a clean copy on paper. Look here, Trip! I will not be spied on and cross-examined. I give you fair warning, I will not allow it. Mischief will come of it.'

Trip soon perceived that she was watched by the woman who did all the house-work, when her husband was away. This woman was clearly initiated into the secrets of her master, secrets which were kept from herself, the wife. This made Trip jealous and suspicious. She particularly disliked this maid, who had an unpleasant face, and was dirty.

The woman did not take the pains to be civil to Trip. She viewed her with malevolence, and was sometimes disobedient, and occasionally rude. Trip remonstrated with her

husband. She said that she could not endure the woman, and would not live in the house with her any longer.

'All right,' answered Mr. Beaufort, 'I'll give Nelly a month's warning. Put up with her for a few weeks, and I'll engage you another. Servants are hard to get, and we should be in a pretty plight if left without any.'

'Oh, let her go!' entreated Trip. 'Let her go at once, I will gladly do her work myself, for the pleasure of getting rid of her.'

'What!' exclaimed her husband. '*You* work as a menial, after having married me? Not to be thought of for Mrs. Beaufort.'

Trip, who had been so free, was a prisoner; so lively, was now pensive; so fond of singing and skipping and talking, now sat still in her chair, with her hands in her lap, looking at the plain paper on the wall in front of her, doing nothing, and without the heart to sing, and with no one to whom to speak.

She put on her pretty crushed-strawberry dress and black mittens and pink bonnet-hat, and looked at herself in the glass; then threw away her bonnet on the bed, cast herself into the

chair again, and the tears ran silently down her cheeks.

Poor Trip! She was beginning to find out that she had been deceived in everything which she had expected.

IV.

HOW SHE BECAME SURE OF IT.

TRIP had no money in her pocket. She had started from home with five pounds which her father had given her.

'Although your husband be rich, Trip,' Dick had said; 'still it's just as well you should have something of your very own, and not have to ask him for every trifle you may need. And, Trip, if ever you want aught, and are shy of asking him, I'm your dad, in velveteen and gaiters, and I've good wages, and the disposal of some of the game I take unasked as a perquisite, and can put away a pound or two; and you must ask me at any time should you want money unbeknown to your grand husband in broadcloth and silk hat.'

Now this five pounds was gone. It had been given to Trip in a note, not in gold. She had not changed it; she had had no occasion, no oppor-

tunity, to change it; and one day—it was the very day after her marriage—Mr. Beaufort borrowed it of her.

She did not like at once to remind him of the money, though he had asked the loan for ten minutes to pay for coals. But when a week passed and nothing was said of the five pounds, she ventured timidly to recall it to Algernon. He laughed.

'My dear Trip, what can you want money for? I pay for everything. You have no bills, you buy nothing. Ask me for anything you want, and you shall have it.'

'I ask for the five pounds back,' she said with some spirit.

'That,' said he, putting his hand in his pocket and drawing forth some silver, 'that is not possible just now; I have not been to the bank and drawn any money out. I have only seven-and-six in silver, tenpence in copper, and thirty shillings in gold.'

'Then let me have the thirty shillings.'

'My precious Trip—what for? It will force me to go to-day, which will be most inconvenient, to town, to my bankers.'

'Then the seven-and-six on account.'

'That I want for the baker, who is demanding his account. We have had pound cakes as well as bread, and tea-cake, too.'

'Then give me the tenpence in coppers.'

'I must buy some stamps; I am run out of Queen's heads.'

'That is precisely what I want money for,' said Trip testily. 'I have neither paper nor envelopes nor stamps. I have nothing to do with my time; I want to write letters.'

'Do you?' asked Mr. Beaufort with some sharpness. 'Have I not told you that I will not have letters sent home or anywhere for a month? Wait till the month's end, and then you may write as much as you like.'

'But why not now?'

'Because I will not allow it.' He was angry, and an ugly expression came in his face which frightened Trip. 'Mind what I have already said. You disobey me at your peril!'

Then he left the room.

Instead of crushing her with his threatening words and tone he had irritated her. Trip had been accustomed to have her own way all her life

as far as it had run, and contrariety was what she could not endure.

She did not cry; she sat brooding, with pursed lips and contracted brows, and a very angry, rebellious light in her eyes. She sat twirling her diamond ring on her pretty delicate finger, the ring worth, according to Mr. Beaufort, a hundred and fifty pounds. Had he lied to her about that ring, as he had lied about the Norway journey, and the Court in Gloucestershire, and the house in Piccadilly? She would like to know. She would be guided by this. This was a matter on which she could satisfy herself; and, of course, there was still just a possibility that he was really prevented from cruising to Norway as proposed, that he had some property in Gloucestershire, and a house undergoing repairs in Piccadilly.

So she resolved to put this matter to a test, a crucial test, and act according as it gave reply. If Mr. Beaufort had been false in this, he was false in everything. She would write to her father, tell him everything, and beg him to come to London and come to an explanation with her husband.

She was then without any shoes on her feet;

she supposed they were below in the back kitchen. The maid, Nelly, had not brought them up, and she had taken them down overnight or early in the morning to clean.

So, in her stocking-soles, she stole to the head of the kitchen stairs, not to call the sulky Nelly, but to fetch the shoes for herself.

She heard her husband and the servant talking together in a low voice in the kitchen; this angered her. Her little shell of a left ear was burning. They were talking about her. He had been so unfair to her that she excused herself for being underhand with him. She crept to the bottom of the stone steps to listen.

'I say you're a fool,' said the maid. 'Whatever can have possessed you to bring this wax doll into the house to ruin us all?'

'I could not help myself, she is so confoundedly pretty. She bewitched me, and her mother threw her at my head.'

'You are old enough to know better,' growled Nelly. 'If 'twas yourself alone were endangered you might go the whole way to ruin and be welcome; but it's the lot of us, as you know well enough.'

'Nonsense, Nelly,' said Mr. Beaufort, 'she's such a fool she can do no hurt.'

'She's not such a fool as you suppose,' remarked the woman, 'and may play us an ugly trick yet.'

'She must not leave the house.'

'I've taken care of that,' said Nelly; 'I've took away her boots, and she'll scarce go abroad in her slippers. Still, that is neither here nor there; what I say is, that you have run us all into great risk by bringing her here.'

'Well, well, Nelly, it ain't for long.'

'No, it is not for long; but it may be just too long for our interests.'

Then Trip heard her husband's step, as though he were coming to the stairs, and she stole back as she had descended. What was the meaning of this?

To come to some understanding, she asked for her boots. The woman said she was sorry, she had put one pair to dry over the kitchen range, and the fire had been too hot, it had burnt them. The soles had warped and curled so that the threads were torn, and the top-leather had parted from them.

'Where is the other pair?'

'The rats have eaten holes in them. I left them on the sink in the scullery, and the beasts came up from the drains—they do, of a night, after the potato-parings.'

'Let me see the two pairs.'

'Very sorry, but, because they were spoiled, I chucked them away into the ash-pit, and the dust-cart has took them off this very morning.'

'So I have no boots to go out in!'

'None at all.'

Trip turned to her husband, who stood at the window, looking forth and whistling.

'Algernon, will you go out and send me a shoemaker, or some shoes to fit on approval?'

'Yes, my dear, I will go at once.'

He left the house; hours passed, but no bootmaker appeared.

Trip was very angry; she was being fooled. She called the woman to her, and bade her go for what was wanted.

'I durstn't,' said Nelly, 'not till the master be come in. How do I know but he may have spoke with some one in Oxford Street, or the Strand, or Regent Street? You must cultivate patience.

When he comes home he will bring the shoes with him. Out this way the shoes and boots be all bad, not fit for such as you to wear. The master knows that; that is why he has gone into London for them. He likes to see you stylish shod.'

Trip's blood was up. She was not deceived. There was a leer in the woman's eye that mocked her.

She waited till Nelly was gone, then she hastily opened the front door and walked forth in her slippers, and without a bonnet; she would not go upstairs to fetch one. After she had reached the head of the street or road in which was the house, she turned and saw the woman following, watching her.

She went on, head in air and with flaming cheeks, into a main thoroughfare, where were shops, and went into the first jeweller's and showed him her ring, and asked him to lend her something on it.

He laughed and shook his head. The stones were false; he would advance nothing on it. It was rubbish.

Trip left the shop. Her heart beat furiously

with shame and wrath. Before her was the pock-marked face of the woman, puckered with laughter, looking in at the shop-door.

'Well, so you've not got money for boots yet,' she said. 'Come home and be peaceable. Wait till the master's return. He'll be in presently, and then you can have your boots—and hook it.'

V.

HOW SHE SAW THE SILVER BARROWS AGAIN.

TRIP returned to the half-villa angry, unhappy, distracted. The house, of which the lodgings occupied by her and her husband formed half, was in a row of detached villas. Two or three were let, others were to be let, just built, others in course of erection. The half-house adjoining the lodging of the Beauforts was unoccupied. Beaufort House, Piccadilly, had resolved itself into No. 4, Woodbine Cottages, Lower Norwood. That where she was was Lower Norwood, Trip did not know. She knew she was somewhere in the suburbs of London, but on which side of the Thames she was unaware.

She retreated to her room, and locked herself in. She was very indignant at the treatment to which she had been subjected, at the deception that had been played on her; troubled at the

mystery which surrounded her, resolved to come to an explanation with her husband, and insist on being allowed to communicate with her parents.

What was Mr. Beaufort's business? That he had some she made no doubt. Who were his companions? On what were they engaged at night? Why did she see no one? Why did none of her own sex visit her? Why was she watched, and every effort made to keep her a prisoner in the house? These were questions that worked to the surface in her mind. They were questions that must be answered; she would insist on having them satisfactorily answered.

Trip may have been foolishly brought up, reared to love show, to think much of herself, to be greedy of admiration, but there was character in her—good stuff that had not been brought out. She had shown determination in the matter of the ride on the sails of the windmill. That showed how she could stick to an idea when she had got hold of it, and carry it out.

For the first week Trip had been bewildered, and unable to take her bearings. Cast into a new

world, she had been inclined to lean on her husband, to trust him, though disappointed. But she speedily found that he was not to be trusted, that she could trust no one but herself. If she leant on him, he would let her fall. She must gather up all her resolution, and under the strange circumstances in which she found herself, act for herself.

She sat in her room thinking, but unable to decide on her course, further than to wait her husband's return, and seek an explanation. What steps to take, should that explanation not be satisfactory, she left for the future to decide.

Hours passed, and he did not return. She asked the woman when he was likely to be home, and then was angry with herself for having asked the question — for having admitted that this person was more in his confidence than herself. The surly woman gave Trip her meals as usual, and the poor young wife made vain efforts to swallow them.

Ten o'clock came, and her husband had not returned.

Trip ran downstairs, and told the woman Nelly not to sit up, *she* would.

'Sit up!' sneered Nelly. 'You'll have to sit up

all night then. He won't be back till morning, if he comes at all, and when he comes he won't want you.'

Trip flared up.

'You insolent woman, how dare you speak to me like that? You know where Mr. Beaufort is? Where is he?'

Then the woman put her hands on her hips, looked at the poor girl, and burst into derisive laughter.

Unable to endure her offensive conduct longer, Trip ran upstairs and threw herself on her bed, and burst into bitter weeping, overwhelmed with humiliation and distress.

Now she remembered Joe's warning, how he had bid her beware of the man who had fascinated her with appeals to her vanity. Now she felt what a fatal mistake she had made in rejecting faithful, solid Joe's offer. It was too late. As she had made her bed, so must she lie on it. But, oh! what a bed of thorns it was already proving itself to be.

Oh, that dear old windmill! The happy hours she had spent in it! The creaking of the timber in the stress of the wind, the whirr of the wings,

the grind of the wheels, the throb of the shifter, the rattle of the inking-box; how all these sounds came back to her in the night! She had lowered the gas to a pea, and lay on her bed thinking, her brain wide awake in nervous excitation.

Oh, the pleasant smell of the flour, and the bean-field in June in full blossom!

How sweet Joe's honey had been. No honey like it in the world. He kept in the mill some bread and a plate of comb, and he had allowed Trip always, when she came to the mill, to eat his bread-and-honey.

She thought of the little house with its tile roof, and the sunflowers and hives; and the willows about the garden growing out of the edge of the dyke, and of the duckweed, and the white shining flowers studding the water like stars studding the sky. Then she left the bed, and in the half-darkness groped in her workbox till she found her whistle; and now she took a piece of string and fastened it to the whistle, and hung it round her neck. It should hang there, a dear remembrance of happy old times, of innocent, sunny childhood, when she had no sorrows, no dark and dreadful future before her.

She threw herself on the bed again, and found her pillow wet with tears. She put the whistle to her lips, not to pipe loud on it, but to try it, to call up old associations. Alas! the whistle would not act, the bark was split. She had piped the last call on it that night in the park when Joe had refused to return, piped her last chance away; now the voice was gone from the whistle, and with its failure it appeared to Trip as if every hope was departed from her. Who could help her now Algernon Beaufort was her lawful husband and protector? What could Joe do for her? or what could even father and mother?

Oh, the shame of having to return to Ringwood with the confession that she had been duped! How could she face Joe? How bear the jeers of those who had encouraged her, yet had secretly envied her, and would rejoice over her disappointment?

Eleven o'clock had struck. Twelve—midnight was past. One o'clock. Still her husband was not returned. She knew that the woman Nelly was below, awake, and waiting for her master's return. What was more, she was making up a great fire in the stove in the dining-room.

Nelly was much older than Mr. Beaufort, very ugly, but her expression was much more ugly than her features. She certainly was wholly in his confidence; and he must assuredly be afraid of offending her, or he would not have suffered her to behave rudely to his wife. Trip was sure that Mr. Beaufort loved her; she was quite as sure that she did not love him, never had loved him—and she was linked to him, by her own act, for life.

Two o'clock.

Nelly was at the fire stirring it, adding coal and coke. Then Trip heard a soft step on the stair, or rather the creak of the stair under an ascending heavy tread, and once the rattle of a loose bar in the banister. Trip heard the step at her door. Nelly had come there to listen if her mistress were asleep, to see if the room were dark. Apparently satisfied, Nelly descended with less caution than she had mounted. The woman thought Trip a young, vain, pretty fool, not requiring much watching, incapable of giving much trouble.

Three o'clock.

Still no signs of the return of Mr. Beaufort. Where could he be? What could he be doing?

Why should he conceal his movements from his own wife? Why was Nellie in his secrets, and not she? Why was she treated as a prisoner?

Trip rose from the bed and went to the window; at the head of the row was a gaslight, none lower. Another would be added, may be, when the row was completed and the houses let. The road was bad, furrowed with the wheels of carts and traction engines that brought building materials to the houses in course of erection.

Surely the new day was dawning! There was a raw light behind that house opposite which was uninhabited. Surely there was some discerning of the bushes and rails of the little garden!

All at once, as Trip was considering this, a conveyance stopped at the gate, and four men jumped down; one stood by the horse, and three lifted something from the trap and carried it to the house. Nelly had opened the door, no bell rang. Trip heard steps below in the little hall. Then the horse and trap departed; the door of the house was bolted and locked, and Trip heard the tread of the three men who had entered the house go into the back parlour. What they carried was heavy, that she knew by the weight

of their tread. She had opened her door, and held it ajar, listening.

Not a word was spoken by Nelly or the men, one of whom was probably Mr. Beaufort.

Trip seated herself on the side of her bed considering what she should do. Her heart beat fast and spasmodically. She was, she felt, on the threshold of a discovery which might bring on her unutterable wretchedness, and yet—it would be a relief to the unendurable suspense to know the truth. What should she do? Wait till morning, and then question her husband, telling him frankly what she had done and seen? Then he might evade her questions as he had evaded them hitherto.

Would it not be better for her to act at once, go downstairs and confront him with his friends and Nelly, and demand an immediate explanation?

Trip stood up. Her determination was made. Softly, silently, as Nelly had stolen up the stairs, did Trip now steal down. There was no light in the passage below; but a little grey dawn crept in through the staircase window. She reached the hall, and saw a light under the back parlour door. She rested her hand on the handle for one moment

of irresolution. Then, as she had had the strength once to launch herself on her aerial flight, so did she now launch herself on this excursion into the mystery that went on in her own house. She opened the door and stepped boldly in.

Before her, with terror in their faces, stood three men in rough coats, and one, though disguised, she recognised as her husband. There also was Nelly. The fire in the stove was glowing red, and over it was a crucible.

On the table was spread out a quantity of silver plate—kettles, candlesticks, cream-jugs, spoons, forks, platters, and ranged, as though in mockery, one after the other, all round the table rim, twenty-four little silver wheelbarrows, inscribed *Propera*.

Trip uttered a cry, 'The Ringwood Plate!'

VI.

ONCE MORE.

A FORTNIGHT had passed since Trip had made the discovery that her husband was one of a gang of burglars, and that this gang had taken the Ringwood plate.

It is night. The wind is high, blowing from the north-west over the clayland level, and roaring in the trees of the park. The only light visible is in the mill. Although night, the sails are flying, the miller is at work, the stones are grinding, the shifter is shaking out the fine flour from the thick. The light from the mill traces a broken thread of fire in the dyke, broken because of the duckweed which covers the water.

There are stars in the sky, no moon; but the stars suffer eclipse from the great clouds that are rolled over the heavens by the wind, then shine forth again bright and frosty. Away in the direc-

tion of London is a dull red auroral glow, the reflection of the great city in the haze that overarches it.

Along the London Road from the city creeps a female figure, feebly, limpingly. As she comes to the gate leading to the mill, she looks up at the light and stands trembling and sobbing—then she creeps on again, footsore, limb-weary, towards the park.

Half an hour after she is at the keeper's lodge, knocking timidly, then louder, but ever in vain, at the door. Then she goes to the window and looks in, and can just make out that the interior is bare, no curtains, no blinds, no sign of the house being inhabited. She falls on the doorstep and weeps, and vainly knocks again, but the knock sounds hollow. There is, there can be, no response. Mr. and Mrs. Redfern are no longer there. After the burglary at the Hall, the keeper fell under suspicion for having introduced Mr. Beaufort, whom the detectives pronounced to be the head of a well-known gang which the police had been unable to break up or apprehend.

Mr. Tottenham was a peremptory man, and when he saw that the keeper's family had facili-

tated the execution of the robbery, Redfern was dismissed immediately, at a week's notice, without a character. The same fate attended the butler, Mr. Thomson, and the housekeeper, Mrs. Podgings.

Two hours later the same feeble, foot-sore figure retraced her steps, and came upon the gate leading to the mill. Trip it was: but altered, broken in spirit and in body; Trip, now utterly alone in the world!

She could walk no further. Her house-shoes were worn off her feet; her stocking-soles, the soles of her feet worn through. She was in her crushed-strawberry gown, with a dark cloak over it; the crisp, clean, bright dress of a few weeks ago was now crumpled, soiled, draggled, like the spirit of her who wore it.

From the moment she had uttered that cry, 'The Ringwood plate!' consciousness had deserted her. She could recall a fierce face, white, with glistening eyes, and a pair of false whiskers half fallen off, before her, and a hand raised, grasping a silver candlestick, a vivid, horrible, haunting sight, and she remembered nothing more till she woke in her bedroom with an aching head, that

was bandaged, and with a smell of vinegar in her nose.

She was on her bed; she turned her head and saw blood on the pillow, and turned again and saw the face of Nelly.

'You're come round at last, are you?' said the woman. 'Well, you'll have to get round quick. I ain't going to nurse you for ever. You never ought to have been brought here.'

By degrees poor Trip learned that she had been knocked down and stunned; that a quarrel had been the result between her husband and his 'pal' who had struck her; and that the three men had made off with the plate out of the country, or, at all events, into safe quarters. The house had been cleared of what little furniture there was, only Nelly remained to watch Trip. Mr. Beaufort, as he called himself, and who really loved the poor girl, had ordered Nelly, one of the gang, to be with Trip till she recovered, not only for Trip's sake, but for the safety of the party. She was to be kept under guard, not allowed to leave the house for some days till the gang had escaped, and danger of pursuit from information furnished by Trip was over.

Accordingly Nelly had nursed and attended to Trip till she was sufficiently recovered to leave, and then had turned her out of the house, which she also deserted. The house had been taken under a false name with false references, and had been made the head-quarters of the gang, where they had defaced and melted the silver and jewellery which they obtained. After the great burglary at Ringwood it was advisable to shift quarters.

This, then, was the end of poor Trip's ambitious flight. She was married to a ruffian who, if he came into the hands of justice, as was inevitable before long, would suffer penal servitude. That his name of Beaufort was false she was well assured; what his real name was she did not know. The wife of a professional burglar now, the wife of a convict hereafter! She had flown high, and great was the fall.

Trip stood at the gate of the mill.

She could go no further. She had no money. She had no shoes. She had no friends, no home, no food—no name even; only a little feeble pride in her still held her together. She had passed the Dog and Pheasant; she had felt half inclined to

go in there and cast herself on the pity of the landlady, but her pride withheld her. No; there was one, and one only, who could help her efficiently, to whom she could appeal, who would not upbraid her, who would screen her, and deal prudently with her.

She must go to her friend—to Joe. She might do that without loss to her self-respect. She was a married woman, and could be nothing henceforth to Joe. A weak, broken friend appealing for help to return to her father and mother—that was all she was and all she wanted. He could tell her where her parents were, and he would restore her to them.

So she entered through the gate, and wearily crept to the foot of the stair. She recalled Joe's words. Was she, as he had said, coming there to revisit the mill in her splendid equipage, with brass-mounted harness and liveried servants, in pink silk and feathers and lace?

She came in the draggled old crushed-strawberry gown, with a bandaged head, and a tear-stained face, and a broken spirit, her feet waysore, and her pride in the mire.

The great mill stood up black against the far-

away red glare of London, but not altogether dark, for above was a light. Joe had a paraffin-lamp in the flour chamber, and it was so placed as to shine through the door, and down the ladder-stair.

Overhead the great clouds lumbered by. The wind was cold. Trip was thinly clad and wearied out. She shivered. She looked wistfully up the stair, the light from the lamp lit every step, and it seemed to her like Jacob's ladder, leading up out of the bleak, black, wretched world into warmth and light and rest.

She saw no one in the mill; no figure moving in the flour chamber, sacking the flour. Was it deserted? That could not be, for the sails were flying, and the stones were grinding.

She held to the rail, and tried to climb the stair. She would reach the well-known chamber, and throw herself in a corner beside the flour-box, or between the sacks, and wait till Joe came. But Trip's strength was not equal to the effort. She pulled herself up one step, then another. The steps were wide apart, and she had not the strength to draw herself up many. She got, perhaps, half-way up, and then fell on the stair,

fell sitting on one step with her bandaged head on another, and her bleeding feet on a still lower step.

Then all her power left her. She tried to lift herself to her feet, but could not. She could not reach and grasp the rail; she sank again.

As her head rested on the step, the smell of the flour came into her nose, from the white dust on it, and it brought a dim, faint sense of pleasure to her. She had her face turned to the sky, and saw the clouds drive by, now a star appeared, then went out; then sparkled again. Even so her senses seemed to come and go, her consciousness to drift away and then become intensely clear. She could not call, but she pulled her whistle from her bosom, where it hung since on that terrible night she had suspended it there, and put it to her lips, and tried to blow a summons on it. She had forgotten that it was split and voiceless; she had the end between her lips blowing, and the string looped round her hand, and even the effort to blow was too severe for her, for instead of blowing a call, she blew her remaining consciousness momentarily away. Only momentarily. In another moment she was caught and lifted, and

held fast in strong arms once again, as long before after that flight on the mill-wings, and she heard a voice:

'I knew it! I knew it! She has come to me. Oh, little Tu'penny! Little Tu'penny!'

When Trip returned to her senses, after a long lapse into darkness, she was in the miller's cottage, in the arm-chair by the fire, without her cloak, in the battered pink dress, that seemed fresh dyed in the rosy glow of the hearth-fire that fell over it.

Mrs. Western was standing by her; Joe was kneeling, raking the coals together, and looking into her face.

She could not speak, but the widow gave her a warm cordial made from Joe's honey, sweet with the fragrance of the beans.

Joe knew even more than did Trip. He knew the real name of the fellow who had come to stay about Ringwood. His name was Paice, but he went by many an alias—Jameson, Davenant, Spencer, Jeffries. He was well known to the police, who, however, had been hitherto unable to take him. Joe knew, also, what Trip did not, that he was already married, and had a wife and children living in Manchester.

Consequently, the marriage in Ringwood Church with Trip was invalid.

From the moment that the burglary had been discovered Joe rushed to the true conclusion.

'My mind all along mistrusted that man. I know Beaufort was a swell-mobsman sent down to learn the ways about the house. Poor Trip! Trip will return.'

Then every night he worked in the mill, and had his light in the flour-chamber.

Redfern was dismissed.

'She'll have no home to come to; she'll return and find her home empty. She'll come to the old mill, I know she will, and I'll be ready to receive her.'

He was right; she had come as a final refuge to the dear old windmill, and the strong arms had caught her to hold her fast, and not let her go again.

'Trip!' said Joe, 'I'm off now. You shall remain with mother. The man will mind the mill. I'll follow that scoundrel Beaufort, or Paice, or whatever he calls himself, if it be round the world. He shall not escape me, and—and—I'll kill him.'

Then Trip put out her hand and grasped Joe's arm.

'Joe, dear friend,' she said, and her voice went straight to his heart, as did the look out of her sunken eyes, 'Joe, leave him alone. He wronged me, not you. I forgive him for this—that he has brought me down out of my folly and pride! Joe! It was my own self which was my worst enemy—not he; no, not he. If I had not been vain and giddy I should never have—have cast away a jewel to get a sham.' She suddenly dragged the diamond ring (value, according to Mr. Beaufort, a hundred and fifty pounds) and threw it into the fire. 'I—I only am to blame.'

Then Joe took the hand, and, holding it in both of his, said, in earnest tones, still kneeling on one knee, with the rosy glow of the fire shining over him and her,

'Oh, little Tu'penny——'

'A bad penny—an utterly bad penny that has come back,' said she sadly.

'Not so!' he spoke with a shout, and sprang to his feet. 'No, not so! A battered Tu'penny, sore defaced, that has come back to the proper mint, to be melted, and milled, and moulded again,

ing,
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all. Is it not so?'

'Be more quiet, Joe,' s
has fainted again, with ove

'Mother!' he would not
arms under Trip and lifte
held her aloft, then close to
the little Tu'penny of bras
minted in gold! I cannot
shout, and sing, and talk, and

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